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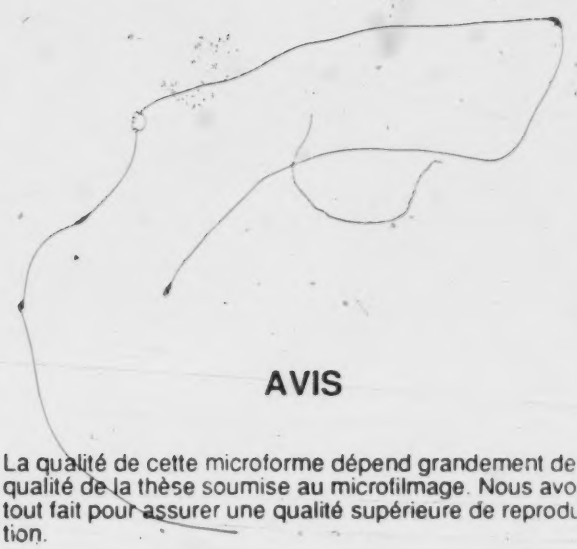

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A STUDY OF THE INITIAL EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS RECRUITED TO ALBERTA FROM OTHER PROVINCES FOR FRENCH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

by

RICHARD A. SLEVINSKY

A THESIS

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MASTER OF EDUCATION

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled: A STUDY OF THE INITIAL EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS RECRUITED TO ALBERTA FROM OTHER PROVINCES FOR FRENCH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS, submitted by Richard A. Slevinsky in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION.

Margaret Haughey

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Dr. Claudette Tardif

Date: [illegible]

DEDICATION

To Karen and Mikaël

for their patience, understanding and
above all, their encouragement and support
et à Maman pour m'avoir donné la langue.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of teachers recruited from other provinces for Alberta's French language programs. As the study is interpretive in nature, eight newly recruited teachers and three administrators from a selected school jurisdiction were interviewed. These interviews provided the data to be analyzed for the study.

Findings of this study were organized into seven categories. In the first category entitled Recruiting, the context in which this study was done as well as the recruiting process itself are described. In the second category which is entitled The Recruitees, this study found that recruitees tended to be young inexperienced teachers who used their profession to gain new experiences, adventure, and travel before settling down. As this was the first teaching assignment for most recruitees, the third category is in essence a description of the induction period. Entitled Welcome to Teaching, in this category recruitees describe their reactions to heavy workloads, learning to teach, and becoming part of an organization. The fourth and fifth categories, entitled Professional Support and Personal Support respectively, contain a description of the

support systems in place as well as recruitees' reactions to these systems. Because recruitees differed in their previous experiences, personalities, expectations and teaching assignments, the study found that individuals had different needs and consequently reacted differently to the support that was provided. In the sixth category, which is entitled The Context, the study shares recruitees' reactions to living and teaching in a small rural Alberta community. Again, because recruitees had different backgrounds as well as different expectations, adjusting to living and teaching in a different milieu represented a different experience for each individual. In the last category entitled Take it or Leave it, recruitees discuss their future plans. For some, staying for another year is the plan whereas for others, moving on is a must.

In this study, four themes emerged. The first one, entitled One Year at a Time, addresses the temporary nature of staffing French language programs. None of the recruitees interviewed for this study had made a permanent move. All viewed their commitment to teaching in the school jurisdiction as one year at a time. The second theme to emerge is entitled The First Year Teacher Syndrome. As all recruitees for this study were relatively inexperienced teachers, surviving the initial

seven month period required a lot of work. The third theme identified is entitled Give and Take. As recruitees experienced a lot of change at one time, adjusting implied a constant negotiation process. The fourth and last theme to emerge is entitled Individual Responses to Change. As each individual responded differently to a new context, the result was a unique lived experience for each recruitee.

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Chapter I

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

In 1968, Canada officially became a bilingual country with the passing of the "Official Languages Act." However, as could well be expected, this important Federal legislation alone did not and would not achieve the goal. To become bilingual, not only in theory but also in practice, necessitated commitment and cooperation from both the Federal and Provincial orders of government. As education was and still remains a provincial responsibility, the "Protocol for Agreements Between the Government of Canada and the Provincial Governments for Minority-Language Education and Second-Language Instruction" was established to provide incentive and support for the provinces to develop and implement French first- and second-language programs. In Alberta schools, as for many other provinces, this meant the sudden growth of many French language programs.

The sudden expansion of French language programs in Alberta schools quickly exhausted the provincial supply of teachers capable of teaching in these programs. To continue staffing these programs soon meant that school jurisdictions would have to look at sources other than Alberta's Faculties of Education. One of these sources was the recruitment of teachers from other parts of Canada, notably Québec. To fill vacant French language teaching positions, over 250 such teachers have been recruited annually for the past three years. Since increases in enrolments in these programs are expected well into the 1990's, continued recruitment of French language teachers from other provinces seems inevitable.

Statement of the Problem

The numbers of French language programs have and continue to escalate rapidly both nationally as well as provincially. As a result of this rapid expansion, the local supply of French language teachers has not met the demand. To staff French language programs, school jurisdictions have had to and continue to actively recruit teachers from other provinces.

Recruiting teachers from these other provinces is becoming more and more the responsibility of rural school

jurisdictions. Due to the demand in the larger urban school jurisdictions, graduates from Alberta's post secondary institutions tend to accept employment from these boards. Rural school jurisdictions have difficulty competing with the larger urban boards for the limited supply of Alberta graduates. Another factor affecting rural school jurisdictions is that they are viewed by the larger urban boards as a source of experienced teachers for their French language programs. Consequently, this adds to the difficulty rural boards have in retaining for more than two or three years teachers for these programs.

School jurisdictions recruiting teachers from other provinces also have to contend with the temporary nature of the recruitment. Provincial figures indicate that many recruited teachers who accept employment with Alberta school jurisdictions do not stay for more than two or three years, (Advanced Education, 1988).

The problem to be addressed, then, is the need for retention of French language teachers recruited by rural school jurisdictions from other provinces. To do this, the initial experiences of teachers recruited to Alberta from these other provinces for its rural French language programs will be examined. The following four guiding questions will be used:

1. How do teachers who are recruited to Alberta to

teach in French language programs describe their initial experiences?;

2. What types of professional and social orientation are provided for these teachers?;

3. How do the teachers react to the orientation and induction activities provided?; and

4. What orientation and induction activities might enhance the favourableness of the initial teaching experiences of teachers in French language programs?

It is anticipated that the study findings will permit school jurisdiction personnel as well as newly recruited teachers to have a better understanding of the initial experiences of teachers recruited from other provinces for Alberta's rural French language programs.

Significance of the Problem

This study has both theoretical and practical significance. The results of this study may be of interest to stakeholders in rural French language programs.

Since the study focused on the initial experiences of teachers recruited to Alberta from other provinces, insights from the results may be of interest to both theorists and practitioners.

The results of this study may provide insights for administrators of rural school jurisdictions who actively recruit teachers for their French language programs. Obtaining a better understanding of the recruitees' initial experiences has potential for changing the practice of recruiting and receiving these new teachers. Based on the assumption that a positive experience is likely to improve teacher retention, administrators of rural school jurisdictions may alter current practices in the recruiting process to ensure that the initial experiences of these teachers are more positive.

The results of this study may also provide insights that have an impact on how to deal with both the issue of the supply of teachers for Alberta's French language programs as well as the rate of growth of these programs. Consequently, this study may provide insight for strategies in dealing with the problem of teacher supply in this area as well as the area of programming.

In any event, the greatest beneficiary of this study may be the future students enrolled in rural French language programs. It is expected that this study will add to the knowledge that major stakeholders and decision makers have available to them when making decisions concerning French language programs.

Literature Review

An initial review of the related literature was completed in order to permit the researcher to develop a conceptual framework as well as questions pertinent to the study question which could be included in the interview guides, (Appendices A and B).

Before any teacher recruitment is to be done, it may be useful to have an effective system in place to receive these teachers. Since the problem focuses on recruiting for French immersion programs in rural Alberta, perhaps it would prove useful to prepare the principals of these schools to receive newly recruited teachers from other provinces for their programs. To do this, Small (1986) suggests that since the principal is largely responsible for a school's effectiveness, then an induction program for principals is necessary. In this regard, perhaps rural jurisdictions could cooperate to provide principals of schools offering a French language program with the skills needed to receive newly recruited teachers from other provinces. As Small (1986) writes, this type of induction for principals would also serve to clarify their role vis à vis the uniqueness of the various French language programs.

On the subject of recruitment itself, Heynderickx (1987) and Rebore (1987) stress the importance of choosing the appropriate candidate for the job. More specifically, they examine the interviewer's role to this end. When looking more closely at the issue of recruitment for rural schools, Carlson and Matthes (1986) identify pace of living, cost of living, size of school, community, and parent-community supports as the main reasons why candidates chose to teach in rural schools. In looking specifically at rural boards which recruit teachers from other provinces for their schools, Carlson and Matthes (1986) suggest that the interviewers could play a greater role in verifying if the recruitees' expectations match the experience likely to occur by using these five reasons as criteria.

Another subject explored was in the area of culture shock. Québec and Alberta, for example, are obviously different from each other in many ways. However, perhaps the most obvious difference is that Alberta is predominantly an anglophone province whereas Québec is francophone. Therefore, on the basis of language alone, these represent two distinct cultures. A related study carried by Meloni (1986) examines the adjustment problems experienced by foreign students studying in the United States. In this study, she found homesickness, finances,

housing and food, proficiency with the English language, understanding social customs, making friends, forming relationships with the opposite gender, and acceptance in social groups to be the areas causing the most concern. Given the distance, language and culture of Québec, some of the same adjustment problems may be experienced by Québec teachers recruited to Alberta.

Teacher induction programs can be divided into two categories: pre-service and in-service. Concerning pre-service programs, Mickler (1984) and Meloni (1986) both stress the importance of beginning the school year effectively. Brooks and Hirsh (1986) look at an induction model for new teachers. In it, they suggest that first year teachers receive a pre-service orientation session to prepare them for their first school year. This is particularly important in French language programs because most recruited teachers are new to the province and in many cases, these teachers come with no prior teaching experience. They therefore could benefit from a pre-service orientation program.

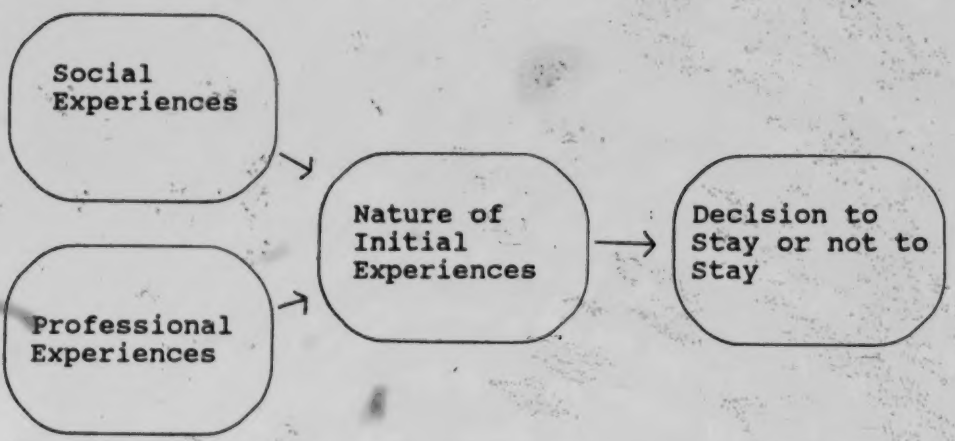
Concerning first year teacher in-service, many useful ideas were presented in the related literature. Jensen (1986), Zimpher et al. (1986) and Meloni (1986) all suggest that new teachers be twinned with a mentor or support teacher. The reasons for this are many; however,

the most obvious one is simply to have access to someone in case help is required. Jensen (1986) and Rebore (1987) also suggest that increased supervision be given to first year teachers. The primary intent of the supervision is to provide assistance in improving instruction; a formative rather than a summative end. Mickler (1984) and Brooks and Hirsh (1986) suggest that the principal work very closely with new teachers and meet with them on a regular basis. Brooks and Hirsh (1986) also recommend that professional seminars be organized for new teachers and Zimpher (1986) suggests that these seminars could be used by first year teachers to report and share their experiences and the nature of their first year teaching. On the notion of overcoming language problems, Meloni (1986) recommends that English as a Second Language classes be made available to foreign students. Given that a number of recruitees from other provinces may have difficulty with English and that language may be the most important vehicle to solving other problems, perhaps offering assistance to this end would be desirable. Meloni (1986) also brings out the notion of counselling. In this regard, perhaps a counselling system could be explored given that Alberta recruits in excess of 250 teachers annually.

The last area deals with the subject of teacher retention. Rydell et al. (1986) look at the sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction for teachers. They go on to conclude that a correlation between low teacher satisfaction and high teacher turnover exists. In transferring these findings to this study, does a relationship exist between the high turnover rate of French language teachers for rural school jurisdictions and satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction related to the initial experiences of these teachers? This question will be addressed further.

Conceptual Framework

The social and professional experiences of teachers recruited from other provinces for French language teaching positions form a backdrop for their initial teaching experience in Alberta. A positive initial experience is probably more likely to result in a higher retention rate or to prolong service than is a negative one. On the following page is a diagrammatic representation of the relationship of the initial experiences and retention decisions of French language teachers recruited from other provinces for rural Alberta.



Assumptions

The three major assumptions underlying this study are that:

1. A move to Alberta from another province represents a change and therefore constitutes an initial experience for recruitees;
2. Living and teaching in a rural setting constitutes a different experience from recruitees' previous experience of living and teaching in an urban setting; and
3. Positive social and professional experiences for recruited teachers may increase teacher retention or prolong service.

Delimitations

The study is delimited to teachers recruited to Alberta from other provinces for its French language programs. Because the context may vary from one rural jurisdiction to another, the study is further delimited to one rural school jurisdiction. Also, respondents, recruitees as well as administrators, were interviewed at one point in time.

Caution should be exercised in transferring study findings to teachers recruited for other assignments and also to teachers recruited from other countries.

Limitations

The major limitation of the study is that respondents may be unwilling to share their experiences - both social and professional. Further, the jurisdiction chosen for this study may have unique features which limits the study's transferability.

Definition of Terms

The following terms need to be defined to ensure correct interpretation of the study:

French language program - includes francophone or French minority, French immersion, and core French programs.

Initial experience - the resulting experience made up of both the social and professional experiences. For this study, the initial experience is further defined to be the first seven months teaching and living in Alberta, i.e. September 1, 1988 through March 31, 1989.

a. Social experiences - are all experiences of a social nature relating to the personal, non-professional life.

b. Professional experiences - are all experiences relating to the professional life of the teacher.

Rural school - a school not located in a city. In Alberta, a centre is deemed to be a city once it has attained a population of 10,000 or more. Exceptions to this are the City of Drumheller which does not have a population near 10,000, and those bedroom communities within 30 kilometres of Edmonton and Calgary.

Chapter II

THE METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study, which is interpretive in nature, sought to understand the initial lived experiences of teachers recruited to Alberta from other provinces for its rural French language programs. In an interpretive study, the focus is on understanding the lives of the respondents. It is accepted that people give meaning to their own actions and interpret the actions of others. Hence, meaning is contextually based and individually constructed. According to Blumer(1969), the role of the researcher in a naturalistic study has "to be made from the position of the actor. One would have to see the operating situation as the actor sees it. You have to define and interpret the objects as the actor interprets them," (p.542).

As this study sought to understand the meanings recruitees held with regard to their initial social and professional experiences in Alberta, the researcher attempted to report these experiences as the recruitees

would have described them. To do this, the researcher used Boydan and Biklen's (1982) five guiding principles of qualitative research. These are:

1. Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument;
2. Qualitative research is descriptive;
3. Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products. How do people negotiate meaning? How do certain terms come to be applied?;
4. Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively; and
5. Meaning is of essential concern to the qualitative approach, (pp.27-8).

It is in this light that the methods used to carry out this investigation are described in this chapter.

Design of the Study

In order to choose a jurisdiction for the study, 12 rural school jurisdictions were surveyed. The purpose of the survey was to identify rural school jurisdictions which offered one or more French language programs and also those jurisdictions which had recruited a sufficient number of French language teachers from other provinces during the current and previous school years to ensure anonymity of study participants. From this survey, seven potential school jurisdictions were identified.

Data for this study were gathered using semi-structured interviews. Before any interviews were conducted, a preliminary review of the literature was completed and the conceptual framework developed in order to provide a basis for identifying possible interview questions, (Appendices A and B).

Pilot Study

Once interview guides were developed, four potential respondents were interviewed; a teacher as well as a teacher couple and one administrator. Interviewing the four respondents allowed the researcher to verify the appropriateness of the questions, the need for follow-up questions and the best order in which to proceed.

Data Sources

The seven school jurisdictions previously identified in the initial survey for this study were considered potential data sources. From these, the researcher selected one which had recruited a minimum of ten French language teachers during each of the 1987-88 and 1988-89 school years.

Procedure

Once the school jurisdiction was selected, the Superintendent's office was contacted and the nature of the study as well as how the jurisdiction was selected were explained. The response was very receptive and the administrator from the Superintendent's office assured the researcher of the jurisdiction's cooperation. As the data to be gathered did not involve students nor release time for teachers, only a list of French teachers recruited from out of province for the current and previous school years as well as a list of administrators were required. Administrators included assistant and vice-principals, principals, and administrators from the jurisdiction's central office working with these teachers.

The requested list was promptly supplied. To select respondents to be interviewed for the study, potential respondents were divided into the two groups identified: teachers and administrators. For the administrators, one each from the principals, assistant and vice-principals, and central office administrators was selected. For the teachers, a slightly different method of selection was used.

For teachers, the following information was also requested: gender, age, marital status, previous teaching experience, place of origin (city and province), and current teaching assignment (elementary, junior or senior high). From this information, eight interview respondents were selected in a way which best represented the population according to the criteria previously described. As such, participants were equally divided according to gender and marital status, had a mean age of 24.25 years, were all recruited from Eastern French speaking parts of Canada and only one had any prior teaching experience. Concerning teaching assignments, four taught at the elementary level, three at the junior high level, and one at the high school level.

Data Collection

The researcher telephoned the eight teachers and three administrators at their respective schools. In this initial contact, the researcher explained who he was, how he got their name, and the purpose for contacting them. After promising them both anonymity and confidentiality, all 11 were very receptive to being interviewed. Accordingly, a time and a place for each interview were arranged. These interviews were held on

weekends in different locations varying from individual classrooms, to staff rooms to participants' own private homes. This step was immediately followed with a letter confirming the content and arrangements made in the telephone conversation, (Appendix C). Prior to leaving Edmonton to conduct the interviews, the researcher again telephoned the individuals to further confirm the arrangements.

Once on location, the researcher proceeded with the interviews. However, before starting, he again assured participants of anonymity and confidentiality and further informed them of the right to opt out of the study at any time. All agreed to proceed.

The interviews were all tape-recorded. Following this, each interview, which lasted from 45 to 65 minutes, was transcribed and the transcript returned to the respondent. Each respondent was asked to read the transcript and to make any additions, deletions, and/or changes so that the data best reflected the intent of the respondent's message, (Appendix D). Ten days later, participants were contacted by telephone to record changes to the transcripts or, in some cases, have the corrected transcripts returned.

Once the transcripts were confirmed to be to the respondents' satisfaction, a letter was sent thanking them for their participation, (Appendix E).

Data Analysis

The transcripts, now verified by the participants, provided the data for the study. Using content analysis, each transcript was read many times, key words, topics and phrases highlighted, and categories identified. When all transcripts had been examined individually, categories were cross-referenced and combined to reflect similar topics. These categories were reorganized as necessary to include all the transcript data. Finally, the categories were examined with reference to the research questions. These are:

1. How do teachers who come to Alberta to teach in French language programs describe their initial experiences?;

2. What types of professional and social orientation are provided for these teachers?;

3. How do the teachers react to the orientation and induction activities provided?; and

4. What orientation and induction activities might enhance the favourableness of the initial teaching experiences of teachers in French language programs?

Using these four research questions as guides, the categories fell naturally into the following order:

1. Recruiting;
2. The recruitees;
3. Welcome to teaching;
4. Professional support;
5. Personal support;
6. The context; and
7. Take it or leave it.

These categories provided the framework for organizing the data and for telling the "composite story". This "composite story" provided the source from which the four major underlying themes emerged.

Establishing Trustworthiness

The first step in establishing trustworthiness of the research was done with the respondents. Returning the transcribed interviews to respondents permitted the study participants to verify the data for dependability. In order to ensure credibility of the category choices,

a colleague was consulted throughout. This colleague was familiar with all aspects of the study including the individual transcripts. This permitted a frequent member check while working through the data analysis. Once identified, the categories and emerging themes were presented to the reseacher's advisor for a further check.

Lastly, an accurate record of all the steps incurred in undertaking this study was kept. Should the need arise, an audit of the research is possible.

Ethical Considerations

Respondents were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could opt out of the study at any time. As well, they were informed that the researcher would treat their participation as well as the information shared by them in a confidential manner. With regard to anonymity, sources are not revealed and pseudonyms are used. To further ensure anonymity, the gender used to report study findings, in some cases, has been changed.

Chapter III

STUDY FINDINGS

Introduction

For this study, a total of 11 educators were interviewed. Their interviews were transcribed and the data analyzed and reorganized into seven categories. This chapter is in essence a chronological account of events experienced by school jurisdiction personnel and newly recruited French language teachers. The story which emerges begins with a description of the recruiting process, goes on to describe the experiences of these recruitees and ends at the point where these newly recruited teachers are faced with a career decision: to stay for another year or to move on.

Recruiting

This section includes a description of the contextual background as well as the recruiting process itself.

Contextual Background.

A description of the French language programs offered by Ouestville Roman Catholic School District and staffing needs follow.

Description of programs offered. Ouestville Roman Catholic School District offers three distinct French language programs. These are as follows:

Francophone or French minority program. As Ouestville has a significant francophone population, the school district offers this program. Students whose first language, learned and still understood, is French are this program's clientele. It is offered from kindergarten through grade 12.

French immersion program. Like many school jurisdictions in Alberta, Ouestville Roman Catholic School District offers a French immersion program. It is currently offered from kindergarten through grade nine. Students wishing instruction in the French language beyond this are integrated into the francophone program for their high school years. This is done because there are relatively small enrolments in both programs. Accordingly, by integrating the two programs, it becomes feasible to offer a French language program at the high school level.

Core French program. Also referred to as the nine year program, this stream is offered to students wishing to learn French as a second language. Unlike the other two programs, core French is offered as a subject for approximately 45 minutes per day. In this stream, no other subjects are taught using French as the language of instruction. Students in this stream begin studying the language in grade four and end with French 30N in grade 12.

Staffing needs. In any given year, staffing needs can be anticipated for all three programs. With respect to actual numbers, these vary from one year to the next. However, seven to 10 new teachers are recruited annually to staff these three French language programs.

In addition to the numbers of teachers recruited annually, specific capabilities of individual staff become important. Given the way in which elementary schools are organized for instruction, teachers in most cases are assigned to teach a number of subjects at a particular grade level. Accordingly, this has implications for hiring practices as well as pre-service training. One newly recruited staff member expressed it as follows: "Les gens qui veulent venir ici, en tout cas, doivent être très généralistes!" In addition to reflecting the reality of staffing needs, this statement

reflects an expression of surprise as well as an expression of lack of preparation to this end; both of which are discussed later.

English language proficiency is another capability which is considered for recruiting purposes. Given the bilingual nature of the setting, having a good knowledge of English is a definite asset. At all levels, communication with parents is enhanced if a teacher can communicate in English.

Language also plays a role at the organizational level of various schools. One administrator expressed this in these terms:

> Language becomes a factor especially as you get to the secondary level. The higher you go, the more bilingual staff you need because it's so difficult to timetable. You've got your unilingual English, unilingual French, you've got your bilingual, your non-Catholic, your semesters, your immersion, francophone and English programs all in the same school, your half-time teachers, your gym, etc. So, if you bring in bilingual teachers, they bring you all the flexibility. All of a sudden you've got a Chemistry 20 in English being taught by a bilingual francophone teacher. You say, "Thank God he can teach it!"

Although knowledge of the English language is valued by recruiting personnel of Ouestville Roman Catholic School District, the most important selection criterion for staffing these three French language programs remains proficiency in the French language. In support of this, this same administrator went on to say the following:

> I don't give knowledge of the English language the importance most staffing personnel give it. I think some school jurisdictions are losing some very good teachers to us because they are so insistent on the bilingual aspect to the point where I have seen situations where I would not have hired a single one of those teachers because their French is not good enough. Their English is terrific, though! We hire some who speak no English and generally try to place them in a francophone program where the parents know that all conversations will be in French.

Another consideration which also plays a role in teacher recruitment is religion. As this is a Roman Catholic school district, teaching a religion course is a definite possibility. However, from a previous quote, it appears that being Roman Catholic is desirable but not necessarily a prerequisite for employment with this school jurisdiction.

Ideally, then, to satisfy staffing requirements for any given year, recruitees are bilingual (French - English) Roman Catholics. In addition to this, candidates seeking elementary teaching positions should be "generalists" and candidates for secondary schools, should be multi-disciplinary specialists prepared to each in both French and English.

The Recruiting Process

Within this category, administrators talked about where teachers came from and how they were recruited.

Sources of teachers. In staffing its French language programs, Ouestville Roman Catholic School District has to consider more than one source of teachers. The first source considered is probably the most accessible -- the local source. Given that the area has a significant francophone population, "The kids who go to university and come right back are immediately hired in May and June. This has always been a helpful source of teachers."

Another unique local source of teachers for this school jurisdiction is a nearby federal installation. This installation also has a significant francophone population. As one administrator observed, "we're very fortunate at one of our schools because we have this federal installation which provides three of five teachers in total for the French immersion program at one of the schools." So basically, the local pool consists of graduates returning to the community and the more transient source coming from the nearby federal installation.

One educator elaborated on another source.

> The second pool is the Alberta pool which is from Faculté Saint-Jean and Alberta universities. However, we've had limited success in the last few years because it seems that those Franco-albertans either go back to their local communities or end up in Edmonton or Calgary.

This administrator conceded that in the past four years, he was "lucky to get one or two and the reason being they have an interest up here -- boyfriend. So it's very difficult and very frustrating to tap that source."

The last source of teachers is Eastern Canada which includes Ontario, New Brunswick and Québec. This pool is really accessed using a consulting firm which specializes in recruiting French language teachers; The Vista Consulting Group. However, as an administrator observed, some of these traditional Eastern pools are themselves drying up. With respect to Ontario, "we haven't been able to hire anyone from there this past year. In fact, they were here recruiting!" So, this segment of the Eastern pool can no longer provide teachers. This leaves New Brunswick and Québec as the only viable sources of teachers in Eastern Canada.

Of the sources of teachers presented here, in any given year "you get approximately 70 to 80 percent of newly recruited teachers coming from Eastern Canada: mainly New Brunswick and Québec."

Recruiting agency. In questioning teachers about how they were recruited, all interviewees described a process organized by one single recruiting agency. This agency, more commonly known as The Vista Consulting Group, organizes an annual recruiting drive.

To begin this annual recruiting process, personnel from The Vista Consulting Group embark on a publicity campaign at various Eastern universities. This initial publicity, which is usually done in December or January, communicates the need for French language teachers in Alberta as well as informs interested candidates as to the logistics of being recruited. Following this, candidates have the opportunity to submit their résumés as well as go through an initial interview. Later in the spring, as needs from the various jurisdictions are determined, personnel from The Vista Consulting Group contact successful candidates to bring them to Alberta for a second series of interviews. One teacher described this interview in some detail.

> For the second interview, there were people from Ontario, Québec and New Brunswick. In all, there were about 80 of us. The first evening consisted of a welcome for us as well as permitted us the opportunity to see for which jurisdiction we had been short listed. Also, it was at this time that we could sign up for an interview if we were interested in a particular place in Alberta.

The following day, interviews are held and a number of contracts given out. The remaining contracts are given out as needs arise in the respective jurisdictions.

Due to the current shortage of French language teachers in Alberta, many school jurisdictions recruit to French language teaching positions with this agency. A financial arrangement between the jurisdiction and the

recruiting agency is worked out which results in lower per teacher staffing costs for the jurisdiction than if they were to undertake their own recruiting. As such, Ouestville Roman Catholic School District uses the services of The Vista Consulting Group for part of its recruiting needs.

Selection criteria. In recruiting French language teachers from Eastern Canada, personnel from Ouestville Roman Catholic School District tend to select candidates having specific traits.

The first criterion considered during selection is age. In general, there is a preference for younger teachers; "the 24 to 25 year olds. These people usually have had a few years' travelling experience and have been on their own a few years". From this administrator's experiences, it appears that age is used to predict a newly recruited teacher's ability to adapt. He expressed this in these terms:

> If you hire people who are older, they have a mind set. It seems that they've made up their minds about what the West will be like and what they're going to do about the West rather than let the West do something to them. So yes, there's a preference for young teachers because I guess they're more mouldable: you can mould them.

The issue of being able to adapt is a primary concern for recruiting personnel for this school district. During recruitment:

> interviews always end with a number of questions which can try to determine whether these people can adapt. Can they adapt to a school where we teach three language programs? Can they adapt to a small town? Can they adapt to living away from the city? Can they adapt to teaching in perhaps both language programs? Can they adapt to a milieu where English is the main language used? Can they adapt to having to go to church every Sunday? And so on!

The second major area of concern is the whole area of discipline. Recruiting personnel from this school district appear to be under the impression the "discipline in this province's schools is tighter than in Québec." So, in order to maintain their schools' culture, interviews during recruitment attempt to seek out potential candidates' "expectations and standards" with respect to discipline. Potential candidates who share the same views on this issue as the district's recruiting personnel are given more positive consideration.

The Recruitees

This section examines the reasons for being recruited, what recruitees knew and expected about teaching in Alberta and also examines the recruitees' pre-service preparation.

Reasons for Being Recruited

Each newly recruited teacher had his or her own reason or a combination of reasons for coming out West.

However, two common reasons were identified. The first one was employment opportunity. As one teacher interviewed expressed it, "I wanted to come. Like, I knew there were job opportunities." However, this is perhaps only one view of the situation. The reason or incentive for pursuing such employment opportunities in the West may also be linked to career opportunities in other provinces, notably the Eastern ones. Many respondents cited poor job prospects "back home" as a primary motivating factor to indeed consider employment out West. One teacher shared with me his major reason being that "in New Brunswick, there are no jobs in teaching right now." Still another said that:

> parce qu'il n'y a pas d'emploi au Québec en enseignement, puis, moi, je terminais mon Bacc., et j'ai cherché beaucoup d'emploi au Québec, puis je n'avais pas de réponse positive. Alors je me suis dit, bien, j'ai une offre ici -- j'ai envoyé mon curriculum là-bas, alors j'y vais!

So, teaching opportunities out West combined with poor job prospects in the East becomes one major reason why these teachers accept employment in Alberta, and more specifically for this study, Ouestville Roman Catholic School District.

A second reason respondents shared for coming out West to teach was for the adventure, new experience and personal growth. As one teacher put it, "I was thinking about my life, what I wanted to do with it, and I felt that at this point I needed adventure. I needed to see different parts of my country; I needed to experience new things." Still another added "C'était surtout pour l'expérience. J'avais le goût de partir; de connaître d'autre choses!"

Employment opportunity and adventure were indeed the most commonly cited reasons for coming out West to teach. However, others were given. One individual viewed teaching as "a very positive profession allowing me to live new experiences." Accordingly, Ouestville was his first use of the profession to this end.

Another reason given dealt specifically with having chosen Ouestville over other places offering employment. The respondent had done some research into the various communities and favoured Ouestville over others because "they have more French speaking people, I guess."

Whatever the reasons for coming to teach out West, none of the respondents indicated that teaching in Ouestville had always been part of his or her long range plan. In other words, Ouestville itself happened to have

been able to provide recruitees with the reason; adventure, employment, and a French speaking community.

What Recruitees Knew and Expected about Teaching in Alberta

Individuals interviewed all had different prior knowledge as well as different expectations about what it really would be like to teach in small town rural Alberta. However, respondents did focus on three distinct categories.

The first one of these categories to emerge focused on opportunity: opportunity in both an economic sense as well as in a professional sense. One individual expressed it this way:

> Moi, je savais qu'il y avait un boom économique de pétrole. Ça j'en étais vraiment au courant. Dans ma tête, l'Alberta était une province assez riche économiquement à cause du pétrole. Concernant l'enseignement, je savais aussi qu'en Alberta il y avait de l'ouvrage, beaucoup d'ouvertures.

A second category to emerge from the data focused on the community itself. From their initial contacts with recruiting personnel, recruitees were made aware that they were being recruited for rural Alberta. "As recruitees, we were aware that Edmonton and Calgary did their own interviews. We knew we were more than likely coming to something smaller." So, from the beginning of the whole process of being recruited, candidates knew

they were being recruited for anything but large urban centres. Accordingly, this knowledge permitted recruitees to form a more defined set of expectations; that of teaching in a smaller community. However, even with that prior knowledge, there were surprises:

> Although I knew I was coming to a smaller centre, I didn't have a feeling for what it would be like here. Although I expected fields of corn, cowboys, and the like, I didn't expect the mentality to be so backwards. Peux-tu imaginer! L'Eglise qui mène l'école! Tu dois faire attention à ton image! C'est straight! Tout le monde te regarde!

In sharing the above thoughts, this individual appears to be expressing an element of surprise to the point of expressing dissatisfaction with respect to the mentality of the community and more specifically, his loss of privacy and anonymity. As one individual put it, "you cannot get a feeling of what it's like to live in a small community until you've actually been there. I had seen it, but I had not lived it."

The third category focused on a concern of cultural identity. One respondent knew that Alberta had a francophone population. He shared this knowledge with me in these terms:

> Je savais qu'il y avait des îlots francophones. Je savais que je ne serais pas seul ici. J'étais certains de rencontrer d'autres Francophones. Mais, je savais aussi que les minorités françaises avec le Premier Ministre de la province n'étaient pas trop choyées.

For him a francophone network was important in terms of providing support. The key phrase was "Je savais que je ne serais pas seul ici."

Being one of these "îlots francophone", Ouestville as a community proved to be a pleasant surprise for some. One teacher talked about what had surprised him.

> Je savais que par l'histoire il y avait des Francophones. Mais moi ce qui m'a surpris c'est le montant de Francophones en Alberta. Je ne pensais jamais que ça parlait autant de français en Alberta. Je ne pouvais pas m'imaginer. C'était surtout ça qui m'a frappé!

While he did not expect there to be a significant francophone population, the fact that population existed proved to be a valuable source of reassurance.

For these teachers, Alberta was viewed as a land of opportunity from an economical as well as professional point of view. However, to take advantage of these opportunities, they knew that they had to be prepared to provide their services in smaller rural communities.

Pre-service Preparation

The area of pre-service preparation includes two aspects: the more formal teacher training offered by various teacher training institutions, and these new teachers' previous teaching experience.

Teacher training. Without exception, newly recruited teachers who participated in this study received their formal teacher training at an Eastern university. For the most part, these individuals studied at French language universities such as Université Laval or the Université de Moncton. However, exceptions were noted. For example, one individual studied in English at McGill University.

When looking at "what" these teachers were prepared to teach, it became evident that Eastern teacher training institutions are organized in a similar way to those in Alberta. First of all, students chose to become either primary/elementary teachers or secondary teachers. And, consistent with teacher training institutions in Alberta, students pursuing the secondary route chose a major area of specialization. Respondents described their programs in these ways: "I was trained to teach secondary art and some aspects of computing science.", "I did a Bachelor of Education - secondary route with a major in English and a minor in history" and "J'ai été formée pour enseigner au primaire."

Of interest here is that not one recruitee had any formal training or specialization in the area of French language teaching. All candidates were fluent in the language, however, not one had any training in teaching

French using either a first or second language methodology approach to language teaching.

Given that these candidates were not trained language teachers, to succeed in teaching French as a first or second language, they had to rely on other aspects of their teacher training. One recruitee put it this way:

> I found that university in itself prepares us to organize ourselves in different situations. And, I find that the skills we learned whether they be in history, geography, or math, help you to develop certain thinking skills; problem solving skills that you can apply to anything that you do.

Still another said "quand même, c'est l'approche pédagogique...comment enseigner...je suis quand même formée pour enseigner au primaire." From this, it seems that success for these newly recruited teachers came from their ability to use their organizational skills to interpret, prepare and deliver a program. This tends to underscore the importance one administrator gave to the notion of adaptability. In Ouestville Roman Catholic School District, this meant adapting these generic skills to the various French language programs.

Previous teaching experience. Of the eight newly recruited teachers to Ouestville Roman Catholic School District, only one had any previous teaching experience which could be counted for incremental purposes. This individual was recruited with one year prior service with

a large Eastern metropolitan board. The others were all beginning first year teachers with varying related teaching experiences.

The first of these teaching experiences common to newly recruited teachers was their student or practice teaching experience. However, from the interviews, it doesn't appear that these new teachers gave it much value as a previous teaching experience. One teacher stated: "The only thing I did was my practice teaching, I mean, that's the only thing I had done." Another also downplayed the value of this experience. "This is brand new except, well, except for practice teaching."

In addition to practice teaching, some candidates interviewed had some substitute teaching experience but again, not sufficient to no longer consider themselves beginning teachers. "I did a little bit of subbing right after my last year, but that was it" reflected one interviewee.

With respect to related teaching experiences, one individual felt that these prior experiences helped him professionally as a beginning teacher. He shared the following:

> J'ai commencé à travailler dans l'enseignement à partir de l'âge de 14 ans. J'ai été sauveteur sur des piscines, j'ai travaillé dans des camps de vacances, j'ai enseigné de la natation, j'ai travaillé dans un centre d'acceuil pour des élèves socio-affectifs comme éducateur physique...J'ai

> toujours eu un groupe devant moi. Alors, finalement, c'est peut-être ma première année comme professeur certifié, mais j'ai toujours enseigné. Je n'ai pas l'impression que c'est la première année que j'enseigne.

From this, it is perhaps important to note that this individual's previous related teaching experience is definitely perceived as an asset to him. From his last statement, one gets the feeling that he began his first year teaching with a certain confidence in working with students.

In general terms, then, teachers newly recruited to Ouestville Roman Catholic School District had very little previous teaching experience. They were, by and large, beginning first year teachers.

Welcome to Teaching

This section deals with the newly recruited teachers' experiences and reactions to the first seven month initiation period. To examine this period, the section will be further broken down into four subcategories. These are the teaching assignment itself, the fit between this assignment and the individuals' teacher preparation, the first seven months, and looking back, a time for reflection.

The Teaching Assignment

Although schools used different ways for determining teaching assignments, the end result appeared to be consistent. That is, for all newly recruited teachers to this school district, an assignment with its various requirements and expectations awaited them without there being an opportunity for input. One administrator shared with the researcher that "an assignment is not based on a particular individual's strengths and weaknesses, but rather based on school requisites, program change requisites, and so on". Accordingly, the onus lies with the incumbent to fit into the "job description rather than tailor that assignment to the new teacher's skills."

With respect to their individual teaching assignments, newly recruited teachers at all grade levels expressed concern over the large number or array of courses involved. One elementary teacher went on to say that "Nous, au Québec, on n'enseigne pas la musique, l'éducation physique, l'art plastique tandis qu'ici, il faut tout enseigner!" A junior high teacher outlined her timetable as follows:

> What I ended up teaching the first year here were math, science, art, computers, religion, health, and language arts. Of these, math, science and half of my art courses were taught in French the rest in English. At any rate, I wasn't aware that it would be that wide. I knew that there would be religion and language arts which I hadn't had any experience

> with. But the math and science were a surprise. When I saw these on my timetable, I was surprised!"

At the senior high school level, an individual shared these thoughts:

> "De touce façon, moi, j'enseigne les maths et les sciences de la neuvième à la douzième. Peux-tu le croire? J'ai huit périodes et huit différents cours sans avoir aucune période de préparation."

Another aspect of the teaching assignment which has to be examined is the area of extra-curricular activities. These include coaching, clubs, and the like on the one hand and supervision on the other.

With respect to coaching and organizing clubs, one teacher summarized it as follows:

> It wasn't really an expectation. It was encouraged as a way of getting to know the kids on a different basis, instead of through the daily activity of teaching. It was encouraged that we do that just to get to know the kids on a more relaxed kind of level; where they can see you as a human being instead of as a teacher all the time. But, it wasn't expected: it's not demanded.

Supervision, on the other hand, appeared to be more problematic, especially at the elementary level. One teacher shared these thoughts on the issue:

> On a beaucoup, beaucoup de surveillance à faire parce que les élèves dînent à l'école. Alors, il faut surveiller à tous les midis. Ça prend des surveillants dedans, ça prend des surveillants dehors, puis, ça finit qu'on est toujours en train de surveiller. On a presque pas le temps à dîner. On n'a que 40 minutes! Puis, là-dessus, on surveille 20 minutes. Alors, on est stressé, on mange tout énervé!

At the secondary level, though, supervision did not appear to be a problem. As one secondary teacher put it,

> Supervision is very well organized. I think compared to other schools that I've heard of, we have minimal supervision duties and they're spread out throughout the whole year. And, as the whole staff participates in it, your turn doesn't come up for sometimes months. I've heard of other places where they have supervision almost every week. So, for me, there's no problem there!

The amount of supervision needed tended to be proportionate to the age of the students. The younger they were, the more they needed. However, it is still important to note that at the elementary level, this required task was a part of the teaching assignment which was not greeted favourably.

Compatibility Between Teaching Assignments and Teacher Training

The notion of the compatibility between newly recruited teachers' assignments and their teacher training focused on three areas. These are the individual subjects themselves, the language of instruction and the whole area of French immersion methodology.

Individual subjects. As described in the previous section, newly recruited teachers expressed an element of surprise to learn that they were expected to teach a

subject for which they had no specific training. One individual shared an example to illustrate this:

> J'enseigne les arts. Les arts; la dernière fois que j'ai fait ça, c'est en secondaire trois, c'est à dire grade neuf, je crois. La dernière fois que j'ai fait des dessins...l'art. J'enseigne l'art! C'est incroyable!

The following example also illustrates this point:

> Une fois qu'on arrive, il faut être généraliste. D'accord, une fois ici, j'embarque dans le bateau et j'y vais sauf là, quand il faut que tu apprennes tout un programme comme la musique. Bon, je dis que je l'enseigne, mais franchement, je ne l'enseigne quasiment pas! Je veux dire, je vais faire passer mes priorités ailleurs!

When there is little compatibility between the actual teaching assignment and pre-service teaching training, it appears one of two things may happen. As previously mentioned, these newly recruited teachers may appeal to their organizational and more generic teaching skills to organize and implement a program of sorts. However, the real danger lies in the last comment where one coping strategy may be not to teach that particular subject. Certainly in the case of elementary schools where teachers tend to teach all subjects to one group of students, this may be looked at as an attractive possibility; especially in skill requiring disciplines such as music.

Language of instruction. As these teachers are recruited from French speaking parts of Canada, it is

perhaps not surprising that their knowledge of the French language is not an area of concern. However, the same cannot be said for their competency in the English language. The administrators interviewed recognized this and accommodated this by "seldom getting somebody that's wholly French teaching anything in English." Consistent with what one administrator said, few teachers experienced difficulties with the English language in their teaching assignments. However, one in particular who did have difficulty shared this experience:

> Il a fallu que j'enseigne une matière en anglais. Une bonne fois au lieu de dire "Could you bring this overhead to the library?", j'ai dit "Could you bring this hangover to the library?" Tout le monde part à rire! Je savais que c'était un mot composé.

Language competency in English tended to pose more problems outside of the classroom per se than while actually teaching in English. In one case, a teacher who felt her English was acceptable to teach a religion course was questioned by the parents. She shared this experience:

> Les parents doutaient que je pouvais le faire en anglais. Mais pour moi et mon directeur, il n'y avait aucun problème. Mais quand même, le fait qu'ils l'ont questionner, c'est ça qui m'a dérangée. Le fait que je rendais service par ma flexibilité puis ça n'a pas été appreciée plus que ça par les parents.

Immersion training. The third area of concern for newly recruited teachers was in the area of second

language methodology. For teachers assigned to teach in the francophone programs, this was not a problem. However, for those assigned to teach in the French immersion program, their reactions indicated a lack of preparation:

> Moi, je suis professeur puis j'ai mon permis d'enseignement pour le primaire et le secondaire. Alors, finalement, en enseignement, je peux travailler dans tous ces domaines-là mais je n'ai jamais suivi de cours spécialement en immersion.

Another individual simply said the following:

> Moi, je n'avais aucune préparation en immersion. Aucune!

Still another added:

> When I moved here and I saw my initial schedule, I kind of panicked because I had a major in English and I had to teach two French immersion language arts courses. Yet social studies was no problem. History, social studies, there's a link.

An administrator also touched on the problem. He shared the following statement:

> ...francophone teachers experiencing an immersion assignment, it's a different type of teaching than teaching a francophone group.

Of interest in the above passages is an absence of elaboration on how teaching in a French immersion program is different from any other program. All admit uneasiness with the assignment and claim it to be different, requiring a different approach; a different methodology.

The First Seven Months

In this section, recruitees describe their reactions to their initial teaching assignments, the workload, as well as the adjusting required of them to survive. As well, in this section recruitees reflect on having survived their first seven months in the profession.

The initial shock. As previously mentioned, seven of the eight teachers interviewed were beginning teachers. Accordingly, the reactions reported in this document are by large those of first year teachers. After receiving his timetable, one teacher said the following:

> Actually, I was surprised I'd have to teach science and math, but it didn't bother me too much. I knew I'd have to do extra work because there was so much new, so many new things happening to me at that time that having to teach these two extra subjects really added to the already confusing situation I was in. It didn't really make it that much worse.

From this, it appears that beyond a certain threshold, one ceases to react to a new situation. The lived experience of the beginning teacher combined with the trauma of relocating in this case probably made for this total state of confusion. The task then becomes not so much of assimilating the new situation to oneself but rather of reorganizing oneself to the new situation. One administrator expressed this need the following way:

> But there's nothing like throwing them into the fire either. They don't know what the experience is going to be like anyway. I mean, you can go to university

> but you don't know what teaching is until you're in the fire and you actually take control and take charge of something and...I think it's got to be lived experience.

The workload. Taking control and taking charge of the new situation indeed became a challenge for these newly recruited teachers. However, due to the magnitude of change presented by this new situation, gaining control required a tremendous amount of work. One teacher put it in these terms:

> Il faut que tu sois prêt à passer des heures et des heures à travailler. Ne me demandez pas combien je gagne de l'heure parce que des heures, j'en passe. Le dimanche, nous, on est tous à l'école. Puis, les matins, je me lève à 6h30 et puis je repasse encore ma journée...Finalement, c'est la première année qui est bien difficile; surtout les heures.

Another teacher described the workload the following way:

> It's very hard, I mean, it's not that they're trying to give you extra work. It's just that that's the way it is for everyone. But until you actually start teaching, you don't realize exactly what it is; all the work that is required.

The one particular aspect of this workload which became a real stressor for these teachers was the long range planning. Not only was this a new phenomenon for these teachers, but that there was a definite timeline imposed on these teachers to completing them added to an already stressful situation. Having lived through it for the first time, one teacher shared her reaction to this experience as follows:

> Puis, ici dans l'ouest, c'est beaucoup plus strict en tant que "long range plans". Ça ne parait rien mais au Québec on n'a pas à faire ca. Alors, quand tu commences dans tes premières années, bien, tu es moins dans ce cadre-là. Je le fais eventuellement, mais ici c'est très strict. Alors moi, en septembre, quand ils m'ont dit "Là, là, il faut remettre les long range plans par le 15 octobre..." Mais c'est quoi ça? Je sais que c'est de la planification, mais quand ils me demandent de planifier un an à l'avance, je trouvais ça un peu essoufflant! Assimiler tous les curriculums, les guides, etc...Moi, j'ai trouvé ça très difficile! Alors, finalement, ma priorité a été le français, évidemment, et après, je decoulais.

The workload also took its toll on other aspects of living. As the following account illustrates, an inordinate amount of time spent solely on any one activity, in this case school work, left little time for other equally important activities:

> Tu sais, à cause du montant de travail que j'ai, je n'ai pas de temps qui me reste pour cultiver une vie sociale. Puis même là, à ce temps ici, je n'ai même plus envie de socialiser; je suis tellement crevée.

Despite the enormous day-to-day pressures of keeping on top of it all, the two motivating factors which gave these teachers the necessary courage to continue were their love of children and their love of teaching. When asked exactly what kept her going, one respondent answered "Je m'en suis sortie premièrement à cause de l'amour des enfants et puis deuxièmement, quand tu aimes enseigner, tu trouves les moyens."

Adjusting. A high teacher turnover in the three French language programs had its effects on the students. According to one teacher's testimony:

> French programs have a high teacher turnover. This, combined with the fact that many of the teachers hired for these programs are brand new first year teachers, makes for an unstable staff. The students get a sense of always starting over. There is no sense of permanence. There's no articulation. We don't know what's been done or how it's been done, so we resort to the students for that information. After a while, they lose respect for the system. They don't respect "le va et vient".

Teachers recruited into this setting do begin with certain disadvantages. As indicated, these newly recruited teachers, most of whom are first year teachers, are put into a situation where all of the members contribute to establishing the context for that given year. This is not to say that this phenomenon does not occur in other schools or in other programs. However, because of the number of new members in French language programs in any given year, the context becomes renegotiable. Unlike more stable programs where there is little turnover, the culture which has evolved in French language programs by the end of the school year is less likely to be passed on intact the following September than the culture passed on by the more stable English programs. One first year teacher interviewed said the following:

> Les premiers trois mois, j'ai trouvé ça difficile parce que, premièrement, j'avais une classe d'élèves qui bougeaient pas mal, qui étaient assez agités. Alors, on a essayé de faire la discipline, mais, ils ne comprenaient pas! Ça, j'ai trouvé ça dur. Cela a demandé beaucoup, beaucoup de patience, puis beaucoup d'énergie, parce qu'il fallait que je repète toujours les mêmes choses, qu'ils finissent par comprendre des règles, puis qu'ils finissent par se calmer un peu. Mais, après trois mois, après une période d'ajustement...Bon, moi, je m'ajustais aussi! Donc, après disons trois mois, j'étais plus sécure. Je savais un peu plus où j'allais. Alors, sûrement ça se transférait à mes élèves.

Another individual described this period of adjustment as follows:

> You know, discipline is always a problem when you start. You know, you have to get to know the kids, the other teachers, the subjects you're teaching, and on and on so, at the beginning, I had some difficulties with some kids. But, I would say I overcame these problems by Christmas. After that, it was much easier. I knew how to handle the kids better. I mean, you can do nothing if...when you're tense all the time...You know, now I take it easy and I relax in class and I tend to know more about the kids and I'm more confident. The kids see it too and everybody's more relaxed.

As previously mentioned, this adjustment period tends to occur during the period from September through December. From an individual standpoint, this is the period during which these newly recruited teachers began to gain an understanding, a better sense, and new meanings of what teaching really was all about for them. It is from these new understandings and meanings that recruitees organized themselves to respond to the various demands placed on them. One administrator noted of this

initial period of adjustment "You can tell whether they're going to make it or not by Christmas."

Looking back. From what interviewees said about teaching, it is apparent that the first seven months of teaching in Ouestville Roman Catholic School District presented these individuals with many surprises. From having to teach a subject or in a program for which the newly recruited teacher was not trained to a heavy workload, recruitees had to appeal to survival skills typically used by first year teachers. However, in this case, these teachers had to cope with the added stress of being four or five thousand kilometres from their homeland. In trying to adapt, these teachers encountered the unexpected not only in their professional lives but also in their personal lives. The next few sections will look at the support systems used by these teachers to help them cope with beginning a career in a new environment.

Professional Support

Activities providing professional support are divided into two subcategories. These are pre-service and in-service support systems.

Pre-service Support

Support included in this sub-category is defined as any activity provided newly recruited teachers to enhance their teaching. All activities of this nature provided before the new recruitees had contact with their students are considered pre-service professional activities. Accordingly, activities during the opening operational school day are included here.

During the interview. Although much information was shared by both the interviewer and interviewee during the hiring interview, most of this information tended to lend personal rather than professional support. Of the eight interviewed, only one indicated receiving professional support during the interview. He shared the following:

> L'immersion, finalement, je ne savais pas trop ce que c'était. Mais, lors de l'entrevue qui a duré longtemps, j'étais capable d'envisager comment c'était. On a bien parlé de l'immersion à l'entrevue.

In this particular case, it appears the interviewee benefitted from the opportunity afforded him during the interview to get as much information as he could about the program in which he anticipated he would be teaching. To this end, it is perhaps the knowledge acquired by the interviewee during the process that proved to be valuable.

During the summer. Consistent with what the administrators shared with the researcher during interviews, some recruitees indicated receiving information over the summer months. One individual acknowledged receiving this information as follows:

> When my schedule was made up, I received documents and programs that I could look into to give me an idea of what I was coming into, and to prepare myself a little bit for this: do some more reading.

As with the information gathered at the interview, it seems that knowledge gained over the summer by recruitees also served to assist them in forming and refining a set of expectations for their first year of teaching in Ouestville.

"La semaine d'orientation". In Alberta, there is an association made up of school boards which offer French language programs. This association is known as the Alberta School Boards' Association for a Bilingual Education or more commonly referred to by its acronym, A.S.B.A.B.E. During the past two years, this association has taken the initiative and provided the necessary leadership to organize a week-long orientation session for all teachers recruited to Alberta from other provinces for its French language programs. One individual described attending this session as follows:

> A la session d'orientation du mois d'août, beaucoup de monde nous a acceuillis. On était à la Faculté Saint-Jean pendant une semaine puis ils nous ont parlé des guides d'enseignement, comment ça fonctionnait en Alberta, comment on enseigne en Alberta, mon Dieu, plein de choses...le côté légal aussi. J'espère qu'ils vont la refaire à l'avenir parce que c'est très important de travailler un peu avec les guides, de connaître les nouveaux guides. Malgré que c'est sensiblement pareil, l'approche en immersion est differente de l'approche regulière. Ce n'est pas pareil. C'est important d'étudier ça un peu avant d'être obligé de l'enseigner.

Another individual added the following comment referring to this orientation week:

> Ce qui était le fun, c'est qu'on a rencontré un paquet de gens comme nous. On était tous là ensemble à la fin août et puis c'est là que j'ai réalisé que je ne serais pas seule.

District level pre-service support. Ouestville Roman Catholic School District also hosted an orientation session. The following is one administrator's description of this session:

> We have about a half day orientation session here. We discuss everything from curriculum to whom to see if you are injured or if your cheque doesn't come in on time and, you know, all of those little things.

When asked to share her observations about this same orientation session provided by the school district, one individual described it in these terms:

> We had one kind of welcoming session at the District's Central Office. This session served to introduce us to district level staff and also to each other. But there wasn't really anything in terms of a meeting where the philosophy of the Board was explained. If it was explained, it was done so in writing. They would give you a handout or something, but I found that kind of problematic because I kind

> of like to find things out by word of mouth and by asking people. This aspect wasn't really laid out. Whenever it was, it was like a little paragraph somewhere that you have to kind of figure out what they mean by that. Also, in terms of just the kind of day to day life of a teacher and for example, looking at a timetable for the first time. I had never seen one before! There were many little things which could have been done. Maybe pulling these four or five teachers aside and saying "This is a timetable and this is how the blocks are divided and this is what this is." It took me months before I fully understood what was happening there. More could be done because let's face it, none of us have had that full-time teaching experience. We've all student taught, but that's nothing like teaching full-time!

Although an orientation was also provided at the district level, it appears from this teacher's testimonial that she was still insufficiently prepared to provide a service in that context. However, as one administrator noted, "You can't tell them everything ahead of time. The best way to learn is to get right in there, jump right in the fire!". The problem here appears to be one of selecting appropriate knowledge to be shared before actually teaching, and identifying knowledge to be gained through lived experience.

School level pre-service support. At the school level, open communication from the time of recruitment until school opening with the principal was positively viewed. Most respondents acknowledged this open line of communication. One recruitee shared the following:

> The principal was the person who first established contact with me at the school level. He phoned me

> at home down East and we kind of had a little talk and he said "Anything you want to know, anything you need, please feel free to call collect. Anything we can do to ease your coming out here, make you feel more comfortable etc., we'll do." So, on different occasions, I did call him.

From a professional perspective, the potential to assist these recruitees is made available by establishing a line of communication between themselves and school personnel. Accordingly, the exchange of information or knowledge is available. However, as previously mentioned, knowing just what knowledge or information to ask for from the recruitees' perspective or to share from the school personnel's perspective appears to be the crucial factor. The means exist; however, to which ends to use these means becomes the unknown.

In-service Support

Support in this category includes all professional support provided to these teachers from out of province during the first seven months of service. The following activities or professional development opportunities were organized to assist these newly recruited teachers from other provinces. Although some of these activities were not provided exclusively to identified teachers, they still served as a professional development support system.

The Alberta Teachers' Association. As with all teachers new to the teaching profession in Alberta, these teachers were formally inducted as members of the Alberta Teachers' Association. This involved "a formal gala where new members received their official membership." "La réception à l'Agriplexe comprenait une grosse soirée où ils nous remettaient un genre de certificat. Alors, là, tu faisais formellement partie de l'Alberta Teachers' Association." Of importance here appears to be that this official ceremony served to recognize these new teachers as new members of the professional community.

Another important function organized by the Alberta Teachers' Association was the conference organized by "Le conseil français". This specialist council organizes an annual conference which is usually held in October. Although one of the goals of this conference is to provide professional development opportunities for French language teachers in Alberta, teachers interviewed focused on the personal support provided by this conference. This is further discussed in the section titled Personal Support.

Professional development days and organized in-services. As is commonly negotiated, Ouestville Roman Catholic School District had the provision for an occasional professional development day. Of interest is

that none of the teachers interviewed identified these days as providing them with professional support. However, one administrator interviewed mentioned that "we have our regular P.D. days. But, those are for everyone. So these new teachers follow what's been organized." When further asked "if anything special was done for these new teachers during P.D. days," this administrator indicated that "they follow the regular professional development days." Accordingly, it appears that at the jurisdiction level, these newly recruited teachers are mainstreamed into the regular professional development activities provided.

In addition to the professional development days previously described, the district level organizes regular in-servicing activities. One teacher interviewed described these in the following way:

> Au niveau de la commission scolaire, il y a beaucoup de "in-services" où il y a beaucoup d'ateliers pour nous guider puis pour nous dire "Bon, cela va vous aider dans telle matière, en français, en études sociales, etc." Je pense qui'ils font leur possible étant donné qu'ils engagent beaucoup de nouveaux professeurs.

Another source of in-servicing was provided by Alberta Education. Although only one of the teachers interviewed benefitted from these in-services, his comments with regard to these is worth noting:

> A week after I started teaching, I received a letter inviting me to pilot the new French program. Participating in this pilot allowed me to benefit from two days of in-servicing every month and a half or so. These in-services gave me the extra skills and strategies that I needed. That really helped me out. I needed those skills, I got them, I applied them, and consequently, I felt great with them.

This teacher was fortunate to obtain the professional support he needed. The next section focuses on professional support provided on a more individual basis.

Professional in-service support provided by district personnel. Various staff members from within Ouestville Roman Catholic School District provided professional in-service support for these newly recruited teachers. From the data gathered through interviews, five categories of District personnel were identified.

The first of these staff members identified were the District consultants. According to information provided by administrators, the District has "three such consultants: one for religious studies, one for French and another for English." These consultants are in place to "assist these teachers with their planning, both long range and unit plans, and so on." Interviewees' reactions to these consultants were very positive. When asked what was done to assist him in his teaching, one individual shared the following:

> Bien, la chose qui a été faite le plus, je dirais, c'est que les conseillers pédagogiques étaient là pour nous - surtout pour le programme de français.

> C'était l'implantation d'un nouveau programme et puis elle nous a bien guidé toute l'année. Elle nous a vraiment aidé en ressortant des ressources, des matériaux, etc.

Another teacher interviewed acknowledged the support provided by District consultants this way:

> On m'a aidé et puis je suis encore aidé quand j'ai besoin de conseils à l'école...de la conseillère ou de n'importe qui. Je demande de quoi, bang! Je l'ai, ce n'est pas long. Par exemple, la conseillère venait de temps en temps et puis me demandait "Est-ce que tu trouves telle et telle chose? Ensuite, elle me disait "Oui, mais ça serait mieux de faire ceci au lieu." A ça, je disais "parfait". Puis, comme ça on chemine.

Another teacher interviewed also regarded the services provided by these consultants as something to cherish; a service not offered by all employers:

> Je trouve que d'avoir les services des conseillers pédagogiques c'est beaucoup. Ce n'est pas toutes les commissions scolaires qui ont ça! Donc, par exemple, les autres commissions scolaires à l'entour d'ici n'offrent pas ces services. Pour nous, c'est vraiment important.

The principals themselves proved to be key resource personnel who were in a position to provide professional support. However, interviewees' responses varied somewhat when asked about the professional support provided by their principal. One individual shared the following:

> I'm sure every time I went to see the principal, he helped me out or knew of someone who could. I found him to be a very good resource person to that end.

Another teacher interviewed shared this:

> Our principal made life very livable. She'd keep things very light in school. But she did this for everyone. You know, it's just her character. She's like that. She does her job but doesn't think it's the end all and be all of everything. She keeps a humour, a humoristic kind of attitude about things and she's very good. She would either see me some time after school and we would talk with her or we would just kind of say how we were, how we were doing. If we were having any problems with our courses or any other concern, I felt I could talk to her about them. She also assigned or twinned us up with a teacher who had been in the school several years. This "buddy" was to be our helper throughout the year should we experience any problems or have any questions.

Another teacher added the following:

> Bien, il nous aide dans un certain sens. Je trouve qu'il m'a aidée pour les bulletins, surtout les premiers. Il prenait le temps pour s'asseoir avec moi étant donné qu'ils étaient en anglais. C'était du nouveau pour moi, ça, écrire en anglais! Alors, il s'est assis avec moi pendant deux ou trois heures, puis il m'aidait à formuler les phrases, puis toute ça. Mais, à part de ça, c'est aussi un homme bien occupé qui n'avait pas beaucoup de temps.

Still another respondent shared an entirely different opinion. When asked to describe the kind of professional support provided by her principal, she replied "He didn't do anything for me."

The administrators interviewed also had varying views as to the professional support colleagues were expected to give these new teachers. One administrator interviewed was:

> counting on the principals to either do one of two things. Either to take care of these new teachers themselves or else to buddy them up. And, the buddy system is quite workable and it happens quite naturally also.

In response to this administrator's expectation, one principal interviewed did practice a buddy system for these new teachers. She described this system in the following terms:

> I get some excellent second and third year people that I will put with another one because they are first of all from out of province. Accordingly, they understand that whole scenario but more importantly, they're also good teachers. They're good planners and all around good models. Those are the ones I chose for the buddy system.

Teachers interviewed had varying accounts as well as varying expectations with regard to professional support provided by their colleagues. For example, one individual expressed it in these terms:

> Some teachers were very open, others very closed. I guess it depended a lot on the different personalities. But, in general, the feeling was good. I felt welcomed. Some asked "Anything we can do?" Others said "Anything I have, you can use. Anything I can help you with, I'll do it." So, you had a mixture but the majority were receptive and supportive.

Another teacher interviewed did not really expect professional support from her colleagues. She said the following:

> It's pretty hard for them to come and give us everything. I mean, they started; they had nothing and they have to teach too! So, it's pretty hard to go and ask them to give you everything. But, they did care. If we asked them for something, they gave it to us. I feel the same way too. If you want something, ask for it and I'll probably give it to you.

The best account displaying professional support offered by a colleague is the following one:

> Je trouve que ce qui a aidé, c'est qui'il y avait l'autre fille qui enseignait la même année que moi qui venait d'une autre province aussi. En plus, elle enseignait pour sa première fois aussi. Ça a bien été parce qu'on était deux. On se soutenait, on s'aidait, puis on échangeait. Mais, à part de cela, je ne pourrais pas dire que j'ai eu du support d'ailleurs. Mais, encore là, je comprends parce que les autres profs ont leurs choses à faire aussi. En plus, on a beaucoup de tâches puis ils n'ont vraiment pas le temps pour s'occuper de nous.

However, in this case, the individual interviewed formed her own buddy system quite naturally with a beginning teacher also from out of province assigned to teach the same grade. So, already these two individuals shared many common needs which could be supported by each other.

Professional in-service support provided by other personnel. Another group offering professional support to these newly recruited teachers were their peers. This group was initially made up of colleagues, however, as the year progressed, for some, it included members from the community at large. As one administrator commented, this group "is not linguistic based but rather based on other criteria such as age", and the language of communication is often English. It is often in this social context that these teachers improve their understanding of the English language. As one teacher expressed it, "On apprend l'anglais en s'impliquant dans

la communauté. L'anglais, ça s'attrape!" Given that many of these teachers teach French as a second language, communication in English with parents, colleagues and community members in some cases was enhanced in time by the peer group.

The last source of professional support identified by teachers interviewed was the support provided by a teaching spouse. The one teacher interviewed shared this observation. "C'est incroyable comment on travaille ensemble. Moi je l'aide du côté planification et lui, il m'aide avec le contenu de telle et telle matière."

Teacher supervision. Implementing a sound policy governing teacher supervision can in itself offer valuable professional support. In gathering data for this research, both administrators as well as teachers were consistent in describing their interpretation of the District's teacher supervision policy.

During their first year, new teachers were required to have "three formative evaluations and a fourth summative one". Although practice varied from school to school, these evaluations were either "done by the principal" or by "a vice or assistant principal". In any event, a given teacher was assigned to one bilingual administrator for the entire process. In addition to this, other district staff regularly got involved in the

process. One administrator from the District's central office "liked to do at least one evaluation round for all new teachers every year to get a feel for how that particular teacher was doing." It appeared that the policy was well communicated. However, most newly recruited teachers interviewed experienced some concern with the formative aspect of the policy.

Although the policy clearly stated that the three initial observations were of a formative nature, many teachers interviewed expressed frustration with the lack of feedback received. The following observation supports this view:

> Ça c'est une chose qui me mangeait un peu, tu sais. Il est tellement occupé mais des fois j'aurais aimé qu'il vienne me dire: "Comment ça va? Est-ce que ça va bien?" Puis, ce n'est pas souvent que ca m'est arrivé. A cause de ça, je me sentais toujours un petit peu, bien, "Est-ce que je fais les choses correctes?" Enfin, il n'y a presque pas de feedback sauf quand c'était l'évaluation à la fin.

Another teacher shared his concern with lack of feedback in the following way:

> On est venu m'observer un après-midi puis aucun feedback, aucun feedback...ni negatif, ni positif. Pas même une petite gratignure, rien! C'est incroyable! Alors, les évaluations, je me tiens un petit peu loin par rapport à ça. J'ai perdu un certain respect à cause de ça. Pas de feedback, c'est la tombe. Mais, c'est peut-être à cause de sa personnalité, je ne sais pas, mais de toute façon, ça m'a fait mal. C'est pour ça que je m'en vais!

Although the intent for the first three observations and no doubt other informal classroom visits may be to

provide for opportunities to assist these teachers improve their teaching, practice appears to focus on summative evaluation for retention purposes. When questioned about "la raison d'être" of their district's teacher supervision policy, both administrators and teachers interviewed tended to support this view. Teachers typically supported one teacher who stated "qu'on a été evalué pour la permanence de la commission scolaire." One administrator also supported this view by sharing the following:

> I tell the teachers ahead of time that I'll be coming in to visit them. This way it's not quite as threatening. But, I will give my report to the principal so he can use it as part of the summative evaluation.

Another administrator added that:

> As a school administrator, I just want to see what's going on. I don't want anyone else indicating to me whom I am going to have for personnel in my school.

Resource Materials. Teachers interviewed identified two categories of resource materials which were problematic for them. These were the curriculum materials themselves and the resources the community itself offered as a support to the various school curricula.

Concerning curriculum materials, teachers felt comfortable with resources provided for the teaching of French language arts, social studies, as well as other

areas such as physical education and health. However, in the area of science teaching, teachers at all grade levels experienced difficulty with the resource materials. One elementary teacher expressed this concern in the following way:

> On n'a pas beaucoup de ressources ici en Alberta. En sciences, on a un livre, Les chemins de la science qui n'est pas complet du tout. Il est adapté au programme en partie, mais les élèves ne le trouvent pas intéressant du tout! C'est normal car il y a des expériences qui sont vraiment évidentes avant les avoir faites. Alors, en sciences, il faut que tu te creuses la tête pour présenter ça à tes jeunes.

A junior high school science teacher supported this claim:

> I teach science without a resource book. I had a book but I had to put it aside because it was no good. So, I am using the English textbook and I am translating all the notes and everything. It's very time consuming but if I want to do a good job, I have no choice!

A high school teacher also expressed concern with the lack of resources in the area of science. She shared her concerns in the following way:

> Au début, je me suis arraché les cheveux mais à un moment donné, je leur ai dit:
> - Ecoutez! Je n'ai pas de livres français. Que voulez-vous que je fasse?
> - Bien, prends le livre anglais puis traduis!
>
> Ça ne se fait pas sans livres, sans période de préparation, sans expérience! Alors, j'ai téléphoné à d'autres écoles et puis je leur ai demandé de l'aide mais ils m'ont tous repondu qu'ils n'offraient pas les cours de sciences à cause du fait qu'il n'y avait pas de ressources. Alors, je traduis mais c'est difficile si non impossible! Je ne comprends pas le langage technique en anglais.

In addition to curriculum materials, teachers also had difficulty finding resources in the larger community to support in a meaningful way what they were doing in the classroom in the French language. During an interview held in a classroom, the researcher noticed that most of the display materials were in English. When asked to explain why in a French language classroom this was the case, he explained it in these terms:

> It's very difficult. This, for example, came from Drumheller. I had no choice: take it in English or don't take it. I try to set up displays in French. I really don't like to put up English, but what can you do? I went to Moyer's in Edmonton and asked them for French posters and other resources in French. But, they just don't carry them. So, you have three choices. Put nothing up because it is not available in French, put it up in English, or make your own. After a while, you just get discouraged so you put it up in English.

From these stories, it appears that resource materials, both curricular and support, are not as readily available for these teachers as they are in English to teachers of English language programs.

Personal Support

As with professional support, the area of personal support will be examined in two categories. These are pre-service as well as in-service personal support.

Pre-service Personal Support

Support in this category includes all support of a personal nature provided newly recruited teachers from their initial contact with recruiting personnel up to the time they began teaching their students. This support will be examined during recruitment, relocation and during the pre-service orientation session organized by the Alberta School Boards' Association for a Bilingual Education.

Once in direct contact with the individual recruitees, recruiting personnel from this school jurisdiction had to continue to attract these individuals even though they had already signed a binding contract with Ouestville Roman Catholic School District. Many things can happen to a prospective teacher from three or more thousand kilometers away over a summer period. Employers realize that in these circumstances, a signed contract is often not a guarantee a position will be filled. Accordingly, recruiting personnel from Ouestville Roman Catholic School District maintained communication over the summer months as recruiting a teacher was not considered complete until that individual was actually on site.

Once the recruiting personnel identified a prospective candidate, the first task was to "throw a

good pitch at them". The following is one administrator's account of such a "pitch":

> I talk to them about the school and the community and how we'd support them. Right away, rather than tell them the distance, I tell them the distance from Edmonton in time, always time! I tell them crazy things like the streets are all paved including the back alleys. I'll also tell them about our swimming pool with hot tub, the arena, the curling rink, the lakes to fish in, the undulating prairies, et cetera. I'll also talk about the size of the school, the fact that there are many bilingual personnel from myself to board members to principals, to custodians to secretaries. I'll also mention the youth of the staff. Generally, I'm looking at younger teachers so I tend to focus on the things they do and the clubs that they participate in. So, these are some of the things that I am throwing at them over the telephone. I mention the French cultural centre and the town library. It is also very important to mention that even in a town of 6,000, there are many more amenities than could be expected in an Eastern town of 6,000. The number of stores, for example, the women's wear, and on and on. The number of restaurants we have here in Ouestville always kind of strikes them. So that is the kind of pitch I give them. Then I throw the salary at them. And, I am quick to say that this board has always paid 100 percent of benefits for medical and dental. I also tell them that our classes are smaller than one would find in larger cities and that we have three full-time consultants. So, as you can see, we throw a good sales pitch at them over the phone.

Personnel recruiting for Ouestville Roman Catholic School District not only use language as a means of communication but also as a tool or resource for recruiting. One administrator expressed this in the following terms:

> My French speaking background is certainly an asset when I recruit. I really believe that when I recruit, I have an edge over some of my unilingual colleagues because I speak French and I can also

> adjust my French to the way I'm hearing it from the other end. Some of them speak a very nice French so I'll be very careful on how I use mine. So, in the end, they feel that they are speaking to someone to whom they can relate.

Another support of a personal nature mentioned by both teachers and administrators interviewed was the fact that prospective teachers "can call collect at any time". This service is extended to interested candidates as well as to those who had signed a contract and were expected for the upcoming school year.

In the end, the system offering personal support during recruitment is quite extensive. The intent for this appears to be to successfully recruit to vacant positions as well as to ensure that once recruited, these teachers honour their commitment as per the conditions of the contract they signed. On the other hand, proceeding in this way poses a risk of raising expectations of the recruitees. In recruiting, therefore, personnel must carefully "walk the middle ground between these two extremes."

Relocation. As most of the recruitees tended to be first year teachers, relocating did not appear to be as complicated as one might otherwise have anticipated. For most, relocating meant packing the essentials in a car and driving out West. To assist in relocating, administrators provided some personal support. During

the summer, one administrator "sent a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of new recruitees from Eastern Canada." This permitted "them to get together before coming out and in some cases, some even drive out West together."

Once in Ouestville, the next task District personnel assisted with, was finding suitable accommodation. Again, as many of these individuals were basically starting out when it came to setting up a home, a variety of accommodation was requested. To this end, administrators "provide temporary accommodation while looking for an apartment; room and board, or whatever." Once the accommodation was found, District personnel "lend sheets, pillows, pots and pans, etc. You do what you can. I always look at it as if the reverse were to happen to me. What kind of assistance would I need?"

Orientation. The orientation week held in late August for all newly recruited teachers to Alberta which is organized by the Alberta School Boards' Association for a Bilingual Education also provided personal support for teachers interviewed. One who attended this session shared the following:

> En tout cas, la semaine de formation au mois d'août était très importante. Moi, je n'étais pas trop angoissée mais il y en avait beaucoup qui l'était parce que c'était la première fois qu'ils partaient de la maison...puis...s'en venir comme ça, ce n'était

> pas facile. Puis, ça sécurise beaucoup les gens de savoir qu'on n'est pas seul. Là, j'ai rencontré des gens que je connaissais déjà que je ne pensais pas qui seraient là. Du monde avec qui j'avais étudié à Québec. Finalement on s'est tous suivi en voiture mais on ne le savait pas.

Of importance is that this orientation week allowed these teachers an opportunity to see that they were not alone, not the only ones who ventured out West to teach. Also, as mentioned, many of these teachers recognized each other from their respective universities. Accordingly, all meeting in one central location before continuing on to their respective destinations made it possible for many of these teachers to establish a contact or network with other recruitees.

In-service Personal Support

Support in this category includes support provided newly recruited teachers once they had actually started teaching their students. Categories identified as requiring or providing personal support were the family, the professional community and the larger community itself.

The family. For the purpose of this discussion, family here refers to the teachers' immediate family including spouse, parents, siblings, in-laws, grandparents and other family members who provided

support to these teachers in their home province. Some teachers came alone and others were accompanied by a spouse or spouse and children.

Teachers interviewed experienced different feelings with respect to being away from their families. When asked if he missed his family, one individual who relocated with his spouse and children replied:

> Oh no! I mean, I have to go back there this summer but I don't really feel like it. If it weren't for a family wedding, I wouldn't go.

When asked the same question, another married individual shared the following:

> ...pas tellement. Bien, ça fait longtemps que je suis partie de la maison et puis que j'étudie et aussi que je suis en appartement. Alors, la famille ne me manque pas tellement. Mais, il faut dire qu'à deux, c'est toujours plus facile!

Another married individual added this:

> Moi, de mon côté, je me dis ce qui va peut-être donner la force à quelqu'un qui vient en Alberta, qui va quitter sa province d'origine, c'est de le faire en couple comme nous l'avons fait. Comme ça, c'est une affaire de rien.

However, one married individual didn't adapt that well. She expressed the following feelings with respect to being away from her family:

> Au début, surtout les trois premiers mois, j'étais souvent triste, même dépressive parce que je m'ennuyais. Je pense que ça depend de la personne, mais moi, je suis attachée. On a toujours été proche, puis, c'est ce qui me manque le plus en effet. J'aime beaucoup Ouestville, mais c'est le monde qui me manque le plus -- ma famille, mes amis,... surtout quand on n'est pas retourné à Noël.

A single teacher shared a similar experience:

> Homesickness was a big problem for a while. However, that worked itself out as I started meeting people. I met a girl that I've been seeing for a while and that really was a life saver for me because it brought everything together and gave me that personal contact with one other person that is really important. She was going through the same thing so together we gave each other the support we needed to adapt to the rest of the community.

Other comments from single teachers were as follows:

> I especially felt the homesickness on Sundays; when it's family day.

> Back home, while at university, I lived two hours away from home. I knew I could go home on the weekend if I wanted to. Here, you can't do that but I knew that in coming out here. So, I had to make the best of it.

> It seems like it's harder on my parents than on me. So I keep very close contact with them. I usually telephone them once a week or so.

From the testimony of each teacher interviewed, it becomes apparent one cannot make a general statement with respect to the lived experience of being away from family. Individuals attach different values to their families. For some, living apart from them was indeed the most difficult barrier. However, for others, this seemed to pose no problem. In the end, it perhaps depends on the different support roles provided by a family and also how easily these support roles can be provided by someone else.

In any event, administrators were cognizant of the fact that being away from their families could result in

loneliness. When they saw this happening, administrators "will talk to these teachers" and "provide advances for them to buy their Christmas airline ticket immediately. It seems the younger they are, the more likely they'll say they have to be home for Christmas."

Administrators also realized that individuals needed the personal support from others. One administrator expressed his perception of this phenomenon in these terms:

> They're looking for love and some will even say it. If they haven't found a boyfriend or a girlfriend here after a little while, they're going to go. For example, I have one teacher who's leaving this year. He told me he thought he'd find someone up here but he's getting on in age, checked out the pool, and there's no one suitable for him. So, he's going. And I understand that!

The problem here, however, occurs when individuals searching for a personal support system to perhaps replace the one provided by a family want to live together. As the employer is a Roman Catholic school board, it is not acceptable for a single teacher to live with an individual of the opposite gender. Accordingly, in reflecting the wishes of the local electorate, the board has a policy to this effect. However, the policy does seem to restrict individuals from fulfilling one of their basic needs by "frowning upon" common-law relationships.

The professional community. The professional community appeared to be the best provider of personal support for these newly recruited teachers. From within this professional community, two groups were further identified. These were the administrators and the other teachers who also were recruited from out of province.

Because of their involvement in the recruiting process, the administrators themselves were the first individuals with whom these recruited teachers had a personal contact. Accordingly, especially during the first month, administrators found themselves involved in activities with these teachers which provided the personal support they needed. On a more pragmatic level, the administrators were the ones to contact "should an advance be required" or "should a truck be required to haul a bed a teacher just bought." Early in the school year, administrators were either involved directly in such activities or acted as facilitators in providing the needed support.

Administrators were also involved on a social level at the beginning of the school year. By organizing the more formal social activities such as the opening "wine and cheese party" or "hosting an after work party", administrators assisted in providing the setting required for these individuals to begin "networking themselves

into the community"; both professional and larger communities. Once this occurred, however, administrators tended to "withdraw their active involvement" and assume a more "passive, observer role". One administrator illustrated this in the following way:

> I'll spot something and I'll quickly arrange something. For example, I'll bring that person out for a few drinks or even out for supper. Or, to be more discreet, I'll even include two or three more teachers. At any rate, during the course of the evening, we'll get to the root of the problem just by getting them to talk. Once the problem is in the open, we'll suggest a buddy system or someone with whom I think they may relate. But, it's not formal, it's not something I go around and say.

As previously mentioned, the other source of personal support for the teachers interviewed appeared to be other colleagues, who like themselves, were either living or had lived similar experiences. One teacher described meeting these colleagues in the following way:

> After the first week, I had met all of the teachers in our school. It was nice because everybody was really friendly. I believe everyone was friendly because so many of them also came from out of province. Because of this, it didn't take long before we all started getting involved in other things and meeting other people through that.

Another teacher shared these observations with respect to establishing a support system:

> Quand je suis arrivée, on a fait beaucoup de choses. Ce qui arrive, c'est que les personnes qui viennent de l'Est se regroupent. Il y en a beaucoup qui viennent du Nouveau-Brunswick et du Québec puis ils se regroupent tous ensemble. Donc, notre vie sociale est plutôt autour de ces personnes-là.

Administrators tended to be cognizant of this networking phenomenon as well. One administrator interviewed expressed it in these terms:

> These teachers get together and become their own little families. They get together and they eat at each other's place and so on.

Another administrator shared this perception:

> Their social life becomes these other people more so than the young people of Ouestville. These 20 or so young teachers from out of province have formed their own network, their own support within themselves. They party together and some go out. This year, we even had two of them fall in love! I'm sure they'll get married!

In retrospect, though, socializing with teachers who were also recruited from out of province did not enhance integration into the large professional community. Although developing a solid peer group provided much personal support, it also resulted in certain feelings of being alienated, especially in the workplace. One teacher interviewed expressed this in the following way.

> J'aurais aimé voir plus d'activités qui regrouperaient tout le personnel. Parce que, finalement, l'école où on travaille reste toujours le milieu dans lequel on vit. C'est là notre entourage. Mais, je pense qu'à ce niveau-là, on ne se sentait pas vraiment...tu sais, sauf justement avec les professeurs qui viennent de l'Est. Comme je disais, là, justement on vient de la même situation. Et quand on arrivé, on n'a pas d'amis, alors avec eux, ça se faisait. Mais, j'aurais aimé que les autres essayent de nous connaître. Ça, ça me manquait.

While administrators tended to provide some personal support, especially at the beginning of the school year,

as teachers became more networked into the professional community, this support tended to be replaced by the personal support provided by the professional community, notably peer colleagues who were also recruited from other provinces.

The community at large. The community of Ouestville with all of its amenities and services, is a potential vehicle for providing support of a personal nature to these newly recruited French language teachers. However, the motivation to access these services and amenities depended largely on the individuals themselves and the meanings these services and amenities had for them. The following examples reflect the non-consensus of reactions or judgements to some of these services and amenities.

The first example to illustrate the different meanings derived from an amenity is housing. When asked to comment on housing itself, one individual responded with the following positive remark:

> Je vais vous dire un détail drôle, là. Pour cet appartement-ci, on a eu des mois gratuits. En plus, on a payé beaucoup moins cher que les autres parce qu'on est professeur. Et puis le propriétaire, il veut qu'on fasse venir d'autre professeurs. Il nous a tout fait repeinturer ça. Avant, c'était une bordelle dans cet appartement-ci. Il nous a posé un tapis neuf partout, un paquet pour déménager compris. Comme professeurs, on est chanceux. On a un prejugé favorable.

On a not so positive note, one individual stated that he "found housing to be more expensive here than in Montreal. That, I found very unusual."

Another area to get mixed impressions was the use of the French language in the service industry., For one individual, the amount of French used in the community surpassed his expectations. He expressed this as follows:

> Il y a l'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta qui est proche. Donc, si on a besoin d'être servi ou des ressources françaises, on a tout ce qu'il nous faut.

However, for another individual, the opposite reaction:

> We need more French services...I think if there were more French services, people would feel better; more at home.

Recreational and social services also received mixed reviews. One interviewee was surprised at the array of services available for a town of 6,000. She expressed it in these terms:

> On a été chanceux à Ouestville. On a quand même pas mal de commodités. La première chose qu'on s'est demandé était s'il y avait une piscine. Là, on est chanceux. On est tombé dans une petite ville avec pas mal de commodités. A cause de ça, Ouestville était un de mes premiers choix.

However, for another individual, a different impression:

> When you're in the city, you have your places where you go out with your friends. But here, it's very different. In Ouestville, there is no choice. It's either go to that lounge or don't go.

The last area used to illustrate the notion that individuals reacted differently to various aspects of the community is the area of social integration or acceptance. For one interviewee, Ouestville seemed to be an easy community in which to become integrated or accepted. He shared the following:

> A tous les jours, on va à la piscine. Tous les jours, on nage puis là, on a rencontré beaucoup de gens qui sont pour la plupart d'entre eux anglophones. Puis, par hasard, j'ai rencontré les parents de mes élèves puis ils nous invitaient à souper chez eux. On a jasé. Puis, là, ils nous invitent une autre fois puis maintenant, on se rencontre de temps en temps. Ou, des fois, quand on a l'occasion, on va sur la ferme d'un de mes élèves. Leur père ou leur mère veulent nous montrer leur maison puis leur ferme, comment c'est installé. On a toujours plein d'amis, surtout des parents d'élèves. Ça, ça m'a surpris. C'est des amis en plus d'être des parents. C'est des amis. C'est vraiment plaisant.

However, for another newly recruited teacher, social integration and acceptance was not as positive an experience. She made the following comment:

> On dirait qu'il y a une séparation anglaise-francaise. Ça, je trouve triste parce que moi, personnellement, j'aimerais avoir des amis anglophones. Mais, on dirait que ça ne se fait pas. Puis, ce qui est difficile aussi, c'est que souvent on vient ici pour enseigner l'immersion dans une école où il y a déjà des professeurs qui sont là depuis plus longtemps. Alors, ceux qui sont francophones sont souvent des jeunes tandis que les Anglophones sont souvent des professeurs qui ont une famille et qui sont plus agés. Alors, on n'est pas porté à se regrouper ensemble. Tu sais, ces autres ont leur vie, leur famille, puis ils se visitent les fins de semaine et ils ne se portent pas à nous inviter chez eux. Donc, on dirait qu'il y a une

barrière qui nous empêche à s'integrer dans la communauté.

Given the diversity of their reactions, it may not be possible to provide a support system for these teachers which would fulfill all of their needs.

The Context

Ouestville Roman Catholic School District is situated in rural Alberta. Within this school district, there are several towns and hamlets. However, the town of Ouestville itself remains the largest and provides most of the services for the area. Accordingly, the school district's central office is located in Ouestville itself which has a population of approximately 6,000.

In further examining the population of the school district, it becomes apparent that the significant francophone population is not evenly distributed. Rather, the francophone population is found in and around the town of Ouestville itself. Although the study was delimited to Ouestville Roman Catholic School District, all of the teachers participating in the study actually taught in the town of Ouestville itself. However, administrators who participated in the study better represented the larger context of the district as they worked at the district level.

The context for the teachers interviewed therefore remains the town of Ouestville which is a part of the larger school district. This section will examine their experiences living in Ouestville and will attempt to describe the cultural context in which these teachers lived. As for seven of the eight recruitees who participated in this study the first seven months of teaching in Ouestville also proved to be their first teaching assignment, much of the cultural context is, as can perhaps be appreciated, work related.

A Different Mentality

For many teachers interviewed, the first notable difference to strike them was the mentality of the people. For some, supporting this claim with specific examples was more difficult than for others. One teacher simply said that "The mentality is different. I can't describe how it is different but it really is different." For another teacher, she attributed the difference in mentality to language grouping. According to her, "je trouve qu'on a une mentalité qui est différente des Anglophones." To another interviewee, the mentality was attributable to a time lapse:

> Mon Dieu! Ma grandmère m'a beaucoup parlé de l'Alberta. Mais, je ne m'attendais pas à une telle mentalité. Mon Dieu, c'est arrièré ici! Je n'en reviens pas comment c'est arrièré. On dirait que c'est comme ça y était au Québec il y a 20 ans.

Another shared his reaction to what he saw when he first arrived in Ouestville as follows:

> Quand je suis arrivé ici, je pensais qu'il y avait une parade de pick-up. Tout le monde chauffait un pick-up et portait un chapeau-genre de baseball cap. C'est une different mentalité, ça.

And still another commented on the mentality in this way:

> Parlant de la mentalité, je te dis qu'il a fallu qu'on demande la permission d'habiter ensemble. Peux-tu le croire?

The mentality of the people as described by the previous testimony is perhaps the result of forces which are at play on members of the culture. Coming from outside the culture, these newly recruited teachers are subjected to a new set of rules. Accordingly, to be accepted, these teachers may have to alter certain practices and behaviours.

Conformity

By relocating into the town of Ouestville, these newly recruited teachers are going to be faced with some pressures to conform. One administrator expressed this in these terms:

> There is going to be pressure to conform. A teacher has to make a personal decision and has to live by it. For example, if a teacher decides to not go to church, that is his or her choice. But, the only

> concern is that when that teacher is in school, can he or she live with that decision? For example, if that teacher is teaching religion, there could be a credibility problem.

Also on the topic of conformity, a teacher shared this remark: "When you go to the bar, you cannot go dressed up. If you do, you get hassled by the oil people."

These two examples illustrate the phenomenon of conformity quite well. Teachers newly recruited to Ouestville either have to conform or live the consequences of choosing not to conform. In some cases, the consequences may be more difficult to accept than in others. In any event, either choice is probably going to add stress and frustration to the individuals concerned.

French in a Minority Situation

As previously mentioned, Ouestville has a significant francophone population. However, this population is constantly subjected to forces by the larger population which is largely anglophone. The result is that the francophone population has become suppressed and no longer affirms itself in the business and service communities. To illustrate this point, one teacher shared the following example:

> I think people are afraid to speak French. For example, they could offer more services in French. They can speak it but they won't use it. Rather, they'll speak to you in English. This past winter, we wanted to put our daughter in figure skating. So, we attended the meeting. At this meeting, we asked

> if we could get someone to teach in French and all of a sudden, the people in the room looked at us like we were some kind of strangers or aliens. That really bothered me. That's the problem here. They know how to speak French but they won't use it!

Another teacher shared a similar experience:

> Quand je suis arrivé ici, je suis allé dans un magasin et puis comme de raison, je ne pouvais pas parler l'anglais très bien, alors j'ai essayé en français esperant qu'il pourrait me comprendre quand il m'a crié "We're in Alberta here, speak English!"

Another teacher shared this observation:

> Les Franco-Albertains ont vraiment peur de s'affirmer. Par exemple, deux Franco-albertains vont se parler en anglais plutot qu'en francais. ,Ils sont vraiment assimilés.

This same individual went on to say the following:

> Moi ce qui me choque c'est qu'ici on pourrait fonctionner en français. Mais, ce qui l'empêche c'est la mentalité des Franco-albertains eux-mêmes. On dirait qu'eux aussi sont contre l'emploi du français.

An administrator shared a similar understanding of the phenomenon of French in a minority situation. This understanding was reflected in his recruiting practice.

> When recruiting, we try to hire teachers who have a very good understanding of what it is to be a minority. That, you can't teach to anyone. For example, a Quebécois can work here all his life and never understand where these people are coming from.

Living in a context where French is in a minority situation appears to be a source of frustration and cause stress for many of these teachers, especially if they are recruited from settings where the French language is

either in a governing or majority situation or at least given a status equal to English.

Teacher as Role Model

Because of the size of Ouestville, it is virtually impossible to remain anonymous. As well, in this small rural town, teachers are given much more status than they perhaps would receive in a large city or back in their "home province". When these two factors are combined, there is an automatic behaviour code which is imposed on teachers. Teachers in Ouestville are much more likely to be viewed as role models to their students than their counterparts in large urban centres. Accordingly, certain behaviours are expected, such as going to church on Sundays, and certain other behaviours are not tolerated.

"Shacking-up" as it is more commonly referred to in Ouestville, is one behaviour which is not tolerated of teachers. Even though two or more people of different genders living together may be readily accepted elsewhere, it is not considered acceptable in the town of Ouestville, especially from teachers who are after all "professionals". Although teachers coming from other provinces may wish to live together for other reasons such as "to cope with expensive housing", people from

Ouestville tend to view it as an affront to the traditional institution of marriage and all of the meanings associated with it. In any event, the employer dictating with whom one can or cannot live proved to be a source of discontentment. One individual shared the following views on the issue:

> Au Catholique, ils n'ont jamais accepté que deux personnes pas mariées demeurent ensemble. Mois, je suis arrivé ici dans un tel contexte économique. Alors, ma copine et moi, on voulait rester ensemble étant donné qu'on se connaissait. Au Québec, la situation qu'on vit, aucune question, aucun problème, personne ne s'en mêle. Mais ici, à cause du fait que je travaille au Catholique, ça ne peut pas se faire. Tu vas avoir trop de pression du surintendent. Il va recevoir trop d'appels des parents, puis, tu vas te faire sacrer dehors. Alors, il y en a qui se disent mariés quand ils ne le sont pas. Mais, vivre dans le mensonge comme ça puis dans l'hypocrisie ça peut être un stresse qui est plate; surtout quand ça ne fait pas partie de tes valeurs. Au Québec, c'est complètement différent. Ici, il y a beaucoup de tabous. J'ai l'impression qu'ici c'est un peu comme au Québec il y a une couple d'années.

When asked if two single teachers of different genders could live together, one administrator supported this teacher's testimonial. She simply said "It wouldn't be great in a small town. In fact, it is frowned upon."

"Les grands boss"

Teachers interviewed appeared to have the perception that an inordinate amount of power and control over education rested with the parents. This tended to be a source of frustration especially in conflict situations

where a parent may not be in agreement with what a teacher was doing. In these situations, it appeared that the administrators would support the parent rather than the teacher working with them. One teacher expressed this in the following way:

> Moi, je trouve que le plus difficile, c'est les parents. La majorité te supporte et ils ne vont pas aller contre toi, mais ils sont très, très, très exigeants. Je trouve que souvent les parents des enfants en immersion sont bien encadrés, puis là, ils veulent le mieux possible pour leurs enfants. Alors, s'il y a quelque chose qui ne va pas, tu vas te faire tomber. S'il arrive la moindre chose que tu as fait de travers, le parent va arriver, puis il va se plaindre à la direction, puis c'est toi qui vas avoir des problèmes. C'est quelque chose que je trouve difficile parce que c'est toujours comme une espèce de stresse. Tu es toujours confronté de ça, qu'on te surveille toujours.

Another teacher echoed similar thoughts:

> Alors, finalement, même si'il y en a qui n'ont pas plus d'éducation que ça, ou qu'ils ne connaissent pas ça plus que ça, les parents sont les grands boss. Ils sont les grands boss au bout de la ligne. Un petit appel téléphonique au conseil scolaire puis il n'est pas long que le surintendent viendra te parler. C'est le parent qui a la voix ici! Le parent est roi et est important.

When asked about the role the parents had in the education of their children and more specifically about the power the parents exercise over the school system, one administrator stated that he "sensed this board to be quite sensitive to public parental pressure." This seems to be further supported by the following account which

further illustrates where teachers saw the real source of power in Ouestville Roman Catholic School District:

> Je jasais à un moment donné avec un administrateur et puis il m'a dit:
> - Marc, tu peux faire ce que tu veux du moindre que ça balance. Mais il faut que tu saches que moi, quand je reçois trop de téléphones, que tu sois mon chum ou pas, moi c'est mon poste. Alors, il va falloir que je t'en parle.
>
> Alors, comme tu vois, c'est qui qui a le gros bout du baton? C'est les parents!

Take it or Leave it

In this section, the service sought by the recruiters and as well the service provided by the recruitees will be discussed. As well, the factors influencing the recruitees' decision to continue teaching in Ouestville or to leave will be described.

Recruiters' Expectations

On the subject of recruiting, all administrators interviewed shared similar views. When asked specifically if they expected to retain teachers recruited from other provinces, one administrator shared the following:

> I approach the whole recruitment process with the view that they all want to go back home sooner or later. For example, I talked to another one yesterday and she informed me that she and her husband are lonely right now and that they just have to go back. So when we recruit, we know fully well

> that it is the exception who will make a permanent move.

Another expressed it in these terms:

> They come here because the jobs are here. All of them are looking to get back in the big cities or they are looking to get back home. So, we know that for them this is just a stopover.

Because of the nature of the French language programs, recruiting teachers from other more francophone provinces is viewed as "healthy". One administrator expressed this notion in the following terms:

> It is also healthy to get these young people to come into your system. Sometimes our local teachers and graduates do not speak the language as well as one would like or else they sometimes do not have the same commitment to the language. Teachers, especially those recruited from Québec, bring more culture to the classroom than would our local graduates. This becomes especially important at the secondary levels when we want teachers to be familiar with the contemporary aspects of theatre, cinema, music, drama, etc. Also, we find that these teachers are not caught up with the minority thinking about French. These teachers are majority thinkers about French. They are proud of such a group. For example, I walked into a classroom yesterday and the students were listening to Marjo. The students were working away and you could hear this Marjo or Marijo in the background. Well, we would be hard pressed to find a Franco-Albertan who knows who Marjo is! So, to deliver quality French immersion and francophone programs, we'll have to recruit from Eastern Canada.

Another important aspect of the recruiting process is that administrators separate teachers' professional lives from the community life. When asked if he saw these newly recruited teachers as community members, he replied:

> I do not view that as being important. If they want to get involved in the community, that is their own personal decision. As an administrator, I try and make them feel comfortable within the school setting.

Accordingly, in such a situation, newly recruited teachers cannot expect professional support to assist them in establishing a network in the community which may be a source of personal as well as professional support. This same administrator went on to add the following:

> I want the students under my care to get the best teachers possible. To me, that does not necessarily mean the best community members. Perhaps some people will make that relationship of teacher to community, but I don't. These teachers are under contract to provide a professional service.

Recruitees' Expectations

In general, recruitees accepted employment in rural Alberta for a one year period with an attitude of "We'll see what it's like." This is also consistent with the practice of offering new teachers an initial one year temporary contract. None of the teachers interviewed accepted employment with Ouestville Roman Catholic School District with the expectation that he or she would make a permanent move and establish him or herself in this community. Comments representative of this are as follows:

> Quand j'ai décidé de venir en Alberta, je me suis dit "Bon, je vais voir comment l'année va se passer." Donc, dès le départ, c'était d'une année à l'autre.

J'aimerais retourner l'année prochaine. Tu sais, je prends ça d'une année à l'autre! Mais, une chose certaine est que je vais retourner au Québec parce qu'il y a trop de choses ici auxquelles je ne pourrais jamais m'adapter.

I take this one year at a time. There are definitely no plans beyond that. All I can say is that I've had very good experiences here, especially in this school and there are so many things that I want to do and try. That's what is keeping me here. I haven't quite accomplished my mission.

Factors Influencing Length of Service

Factors influencing length of service will be discussed in two categories: internal and external. The first of these are those factors over which the Ouestville Roman Catholic School Board as the employer has a certain level of control or influence and the second being those over which the employing board has no influence or control.

Internal factors. Interviewees identified several factors which influenced their length of service. Some of these factors were viewed as prolonging length of service or influencing this service in a positive way, and others were deemed as negative factors shortening length of stay.

Three positive internal factors were identified. The first one of these was the economic advantage of teaching in rural Alberta, more specifically Ouestville Roman

Catholic School District. This was expressed in these terms:

> Du point de vue financièrement, c'est plus avantageux ici qu'au Québec. Le salaire est meilleur ici qu'au Québec. Aussi, il y a moins d'impôts, pas de taxe de vente, et cetera. C'est toutes des petites choses qui nous font rester ici.

Another factor influencing the decision to prolong the length of service was the opportunity for administrative advancement. One interviewee expressed this in the following way:

> J'ai l'impression qu'ici si on veut monter, dans le sens qu'on veut aller plus haut comme directeur d'école ou assistant-directeur ou même d'autres postes, on a beaucoup plus de chance à monter vite ici qu'au Québec. Il y a plus d'opportunités dans certaines choses. J'ai l'impression que si tu veux vraiment t'impliquer, ça serait bien apprecié ici, surtout dans la communauté. Aussi, on dirait qu'il y a moins de compétition.

A third factor identified as being an incentive to remain another year was the teaching assignment. This came out in the following passage:

> I want to travel with my job; get new experiences. I know that I will not settle here as it is not and has never been in my plans! But, for next year, I will stay because I have an ideal teaching assignment.

On the more negative side, several factors were also identified as shortening the length of service. The first of these identified was the lack of feedback and encouragement from supervisors; notably the administrators. According to one teacher, "Depuis que je suis ici, le directeur ne m'a pas donné de feedback.

Rien! Ça, ça m'a fait mal...assez que l'année prochaine, je vais peut-être changer d'école."

Another difficulty these newly recruited teachers encountered was the lack of French language resources. One teacher expressed his frustration with this reality in the following terms:

> They bring me here to teach in their French language programs and there are no resources. For example, if you go to the library, 90 percent of all the resources are in English! With limited resources, they expect us to do as good a job as they do in English. So, what do they want us to do? After a while, it gets discouraging.

The last factor identified was in the area of personal support. To remain in Ouestville, the following teacher expressed a need to be a part of the community. To this end, she expressed a lack of support provided by her employer and/or possibly the community at large. She said the following:

> I feel more activities could have been developed which would have helped us integrate within the community; meet people more quickly. It wasn't until after Christmas when I really met people from the community. That's something where I feel something could have been done to help us.

External factors. As with the internal factors, interviewees identified several factors which could potentially influence their length of service. Again, some of these were viewed as prolonging length of service or influencing this service in a positive way and others

were deemed as negative factors shortening length of service provided.

The first external factor identified was the lack of employment opportunities available in their home province. As previously discussed, most of the teachers recruited accepted employment out West because of the lack of teaching opportunities in Eastern Canada. This is further supported by the following quote: "Si on voulait retourner au Québec, il faudrait y penser deux fois parce que si on voulait travailler dans l'enseignement, c'est difficile." Another teacher also supported the notion that dismal employment opportunities for teachers in Québec were his motivation for coming out West. The following demonstrates how he planned to tackle this situation:

> L'année prochaine, je vais retourner au Québec car j'ai demandé un congé. Rendu-là, je vais chercher s'il y a de l'emploi. Mais, si'il n'y en a pas, je reviendrai ici. Alors, c'est une porte de sortie, finalement.

Another factor which encouraged teachers to seek employment elsewhere was that in view of the difficulty experienced in getting a teaching position in Eastern Canada, candidates with some previous teaching experience had an advantage over new graduates. Accordingly, many new graduates viewed teaching in Western Canada as an opportunity to make themselves more attractive candidates

in a tight job market. One interviewee explained this in these terms:

> Si par exemple j'enseigne ici pendant deux ans, l'expérience va être reconnue dans le sens que comparativement à quelqu'un qui n'a pas d'expérience, ils vont t'engager. Mais, au niveau salaire, il faut dire que tu repars à zéro.

The last factor influencing a teacher's decision to return for another year was not wanting to relive the first year's experience. As most of these teachers had just survived their first year in their chosen profession, most did not wish to start over just yet. As one interviewee said, "J'ai le goût de revenir l'année prochaine, tout est fait!" Another expressed the same view in the following way:

> Si je decidé de rester l'année prochaine, c'est sûr que j'aimerais enseigner encore la même année. J'aimerais la refaire pour ne pas avoir à tout recommencer le materiel que j'ai fait, puis aussi parce que je sais maintenant où je m'en vais: je connais le programme aussi bien que le curriculum.

External factors negatively affecting retention from one year to the next were also identified. One of these identified was the value attached to raising a family in the cultural context in which recruitees were themselves raised. One teacher shared the following:

> Moi, ce qui me fait peur, c'est d'élever mes enfants ici. Même s'ils sont francophones, ils vont tomber en anglais. Moi, je veux que mon enfant parle un bon français, puis je suis bien inquiète d'avoir des enfants ici tandis qu'au Québec, je serais rassurée qu'il apprendra son français. Mais ici, c'est quelque chose que je trouve qui manque.

Administrators also appeared to be cognizant of this phenomenon. One expressed it by saying that "When some of them start having family and their children reach school age, there is a big push to get back home. For most, that is the real breaking point."

Recruitees themselves appeared to experience some frustration with the context itself. This frustration was shared by one teacher who said that "Peut-être que le Québec ne me manquerait pas si les gens ici portaient une fierté au français. Nous, on est fier d'être Québecois mais ici?"

Another teacher also experienced some difficulty with the context. She shared the following:

> C'est vraiment difficile vivre en situation minoritaire au lieu de majoritaire. Donc, au Québec, on s'impose tandis qu'ici, il ne faut pas offusquer les Anglais. C'est choquant ça! Ça parle francais mais ça pense en anglais! Nous, on donne de l'importance au francais!

Another negative factor influencing teachers' decisions to return to their home province before too many years' teaching experience was due to the fact that no experience was portable for incremental purposes from Alberta to Québec. Accordingly, as previously discussed, many came out for one or two years but were not willing to invest too much time beyond that. One teacher expressed this in these terms:

> Once I have five or so years of teaching experience here in Alberta, I start to make an attractive salary. After that, it becomes increasingly difficult to begin at step zero again in Québec. So, I come here for one or two years and I'll return. That does not help the situation in Alberta!

The last factor identified negatively affecting teacher retention for Ouestville Roman Catholic School District was the attraction to larger cities. One interviewee shared the following:

> I'd like to get closer to the city, like Edmonton or Calgary, that is for sure. There are more things to do and more services in a larger centre. In saying that, I am also considering my family's needs.

Emerging Themes

From the seven preceding categories outlined in this chapter, four major themes evolved. For each theme, a brief discussion will follow to further illustrate and support its emergence and identification.

One Year at a Time

In examining the problem at hand, the data gathered tend to support the notion that in the area of French language education, actions are the result of reactive short term planning rather than the more proactive long term planning. For both key players, in this case the school jurisdiction on the one hand and the recruitees on

the other, the issue of staffing is approached on a year to year basis. Representing the school jurisdiction's approach, one administrator viewed the issue of staffing in this way:

> You want to get into French immersion; you want to offer francophone courses, you'll have to recruit in the East...I guess I don't see a solution. The ultimate solution is keeping whom you have -- But even then, they come here knowing full well that it's a temporary thing. In their minds, it was always temporary.

As previously mentioned, recruitees for their part also approach the issue of staffing with an initial short term commitment. Not one teacher interviewed for this study indicated that coming out West to teach was a permanent move. To the contrary, all teachers interviewed indicated a more cautious approach to the issue of moving to Alberta. One teacher summarized this best by saying "Tu sais, je prends ça d'une année à l'autre! Mais, une chose certaine est que je vais retourner au Québec..."

The First Year Teacher Syndrome

As previously mentioned, seven of the eight teachers interviewed had no prior teaching experience recognizable for incremental purposes. The eighth individual had one such year. It is therefore not too surprising that many

of the concerns and observations shared by interviewees were those common to first year teachers.

The first concern shared by interviewees was the workload. All recruitees interviewed for this study expressed disillusionment in one form or another with their new job. For these teachers, both long term and the more short term daily planning required for the different subject areas taught meant an inordinate amount of work. The other tasks which include the supervision of students, marking, getting familiar with the program of studies, et cetera, added to what seemed to most an already unreasonable workload.

As can be imagined, to meet the demands of the workload required time. The notion that teaching was basically a nine to five job was quickly replaced with the other extreme, that teaching consumed all available time with the exception of perhaps one day on the weekend and an occasional evening. Although the time required of a teacher may lessen with experience, it is nevertheless difficult for these newly recruited teachers to accept the demands teaching places on their personal time.

There were many other surprises for these teachers. Learning that they may have to teach a course for which they had no formal training or learning that supervision and coaching were indeed assignable time, are just two

examples which illustrate the need that new members to a profession need to be socialized into that profession. What becomes important in this case, however, is to recognize that the socialization process for these teachers also involves a cultural socialization. For example, supervision may not necessarily be assignable time in all provinces. As such, recruitees from Québec may feel exploited if they do not realize that supervision is assignable time in this particular school jurisdiction.

The last area to be discussed under this theme is the difficulty in discovering the philosophy of the employer. Although the employer, in this case Ouestville Roman Catholic School Jurisdiction, could give in writing or even tell its newly recruited French language teachers its philosophy, much of it has to be learned or assimilated through lived experience. In many respects, the philosophy of an employer is verified by observable actions. Accordingly, the true philosophy of the employer is not something which can be given to its new employees, first year teachers included. Rather, the true philosophy of the employer for new teachers tends to result from the meanings these new teachers derive from their work and work related experiences and also their observations of the practices which surround them. One

administrator summarized this best by saying that "The best way to learn is to get right in there, jump right in the fire!"

Give and Take

During the recruitment stage, well before these teachers actually began teaching, both the employer and the recruitees had very definite expectations of each other. As the new school year began, so did the negotiation process. For the employer, this meant bringing its new staff members on board to ensure they set out to do that for which they were hired. For the recruitees, this meant, in some cases, protecting that in which they believed.

As can be expected, negotiations were not always smooth. For example, as this was a visible small rural Catholic school jurisdiction, the employer did not prove to be too flexible on the issue of "shacking-up". For some recruitees, this was a contentious issue as it not only infringed upon their civil liberties, but caused them to regress culturally, in their minds, by 20 years or more.

On the more positive side, certain aspects of the recruitees' culture were willingly accepted. One example of this was permitting the students to address their

teachers on a first name basis. Although it is not customary practice in this school jurisdiction, many French language teachers recruited from other provinces asked their students to address them on a first name basis.

It was during the initial months that both parties learned the most about each other. As both parties adjusted their expectations of each other through the negotiation process, new meanings evolved. In essence, these newly evolved meanings form the basis for future employer-employee relations.

Individual Responses to Change

As each newly recruited teacher was interviewed for this study, it became apparent that although they all came from French-speaking parts of Canada, these teachers were above all unique individuals. They were unique individuals with their own knowledge, their own set of expectations, their own previous experiences, their own concept of family, et cetera. As individuals, each newly recruited teacher had his or her own way of responding to different situations. The individual responses to the many situations as they presented themselves resulted in a lived experience that was unique for each recruitee. For some, functioning in a different social, cultural,

and professional context proved to be more difficult then for others.

Summary

This chapter contained a description of the categories and themes which arose from the interviews with eight teachers and three administrators for one jurisdiction. The categories reflected both the chronological sequence from recruitment to near the end of the first year and the four questions concerning the teachers' lived experiences. The four major themes identified were One Year at a Time, The First Year Teacher Syndrome, Give and Take, and Individual Responses to Change.

Chapter IV

SUMMARY, REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter contains a summary of the study, reflections on the literature in relation to the study as well as personal reflections, and implications of this study for both practice and future research.

Summary of the Study

Since many French language teachers are recruited from other provinces to Alberta each year, the purpose of this study was to examine the lived experience of some of these recruitees. To do this, 12 rural school boards were surveyed to ascertain the merit of the study as well as to provide a pool from which the researcher could further delimit the study to one school jurisdiction. A school jurisdiction which had recruited sufficient French language teachers from other provinces during the current

and previous years to ensure study participants' anonymity was selected.

Once the jurisdiction was decided, eight recently recruited teachers as well as three administrators were approached in confidence to participate in the study. All 11 accepted and because the study was interpretive in nature, agreed to being interviewed. These interviews provided the data for this study.

The data were analyzed and organized into seven categories which, in many respects, are the different parts of one story. The first two categories examine the issue of teacher recruitment. The first category is an overview of recruiting which includes both a look at the contextual background as well as the recruiting process itself. The second category in essence is a look at the recruitees themselves. This includes the reasons for being recruited, what they knew and expected about teaching in Alberta, and also the extent of the recruitees' teacher preparation.

The three categories which follow are in essence an examination of teaching itself. This is looked at in terms of the teaching assignments, compatibility between teaching assignments and teacher training, and also their reactions to the first seven months of teaching. As well, the support systems are examined. These include

both the professional and personal support systems.

In the last two categories, the context as well as their decision to leave or remain for another year are examined.

From these categories, four underlying themes emerged. The first one brings to the surface the notion that planning, which includes staffing for French language programs, is done one year at a time. It became very evident that recruitees did not view their commitment to their employer beyond the short term. As well, administrators interviewed supported this notion by functioning on a short term basis rather than exploring long term solutions to the problem.

Because of the relative youth and inexperience of recruitees, for most this was their first year of teaching. Accordingly, another theme which emerged dealt with the difficulties typically encountered by first year teachers.

As all teachers for this study were recruited from French speaking parts of Canada, relocating recruitees to Ouestville resulted in the meeting of two cultures. As can be expected, during the initial seven months, recruitees and administrators frequently entered into some negotiations. Accordingly, this theme is entitled Give and Take. The last theme to emerge from this study relates to each individual recruitee's response to

change. Each individual recruitee in this study brought different meanings as well as derived different meanings from each situation presented. As such, each recruitee responded differently to change. It is in light of this that care should be exercised in transferring study findings.

Reflections

This section includes reflections on the literature in relation to the study as well as personal reflections.

Reflections on the Literature in Relation to the Study

For this section, the related literature will be discussed in relation to the study findings. To facilitate this task, this discussion will be organized according to categories similar to those outlined in the study findings.

Recruiting. Canada officially became a bilingual country in 1968 with the passing of the Official Languages Act, but as previously mentioned, becoming bilingual not only in theory but also in practice, could not be achieved without teachers. At the May, 1972 conference organized by la Federation canadienne des enseignants, Mr. Keith Spicer, then Commissioner of the

Official Languages, acknowledged that the most pressing issue facing this country in becoming bilingual was indeed French language teacher preparation, and that it was impossible to achieve without the resources of Québec.

Accordingly, on the issue of recruiting, it is not surprising that jurisdictions such as Ouestville Roman Catholic School District have to recruit teachers from French speaking parts of Canada; notably Québec. What is surprising, though, is that a more coordinated approach to the issue of teacher training has not been undertaken. Each province seems to address its teacher training concerns in isolation. Alberta's post-secondary institutions are not graduating sufficient numbers of French language teachers to meet provincial needs and French-speaking parts of Canada are not providing teacher training in French immersion and core French programs: nationally, these are where the largest needs exist.

The recruitees. In his study, Bancroft (1979) examined the experiences of immigrant teachers in Ontario. Consistent with this study, the reasons cited for leaving their homeland were opportunity, lack of opportunity at home, and adventure.

An interesting comparison to come out of Bancroft's (1979) study and this one, relates to age. In his study,

participants tended to be older, experienced teachers and accordingly, most were married with families. It is interesting to note that regardless of differences in age, the reasons for being recruited remain consistent in both studies: opportunity and adventure. Although one might associate youth and inexperience with adventure, Bancroft's (1979) study illustrates otherwise.

In looking at the area of teacher training and previous teaching experience, two independent studies offer insight to the value of student teaching. Labriola in Crocker (1974) concluded from the results of his study that successful student teachers became successful teachers and that unsuccessful student teachers continued to be unsuccessful as teachers. Hence, student teaching reports could have a predictive value for prospective employers. From the future teachers' perspective, Tardif (1984) in her study makes the following observation:

> Most future teachers attach a great deal of importance to the 'practical' experience they feel student teaching offers. The participants in this study were emphatic in affirming that they better understood the role of the classroom teacher as a result of their teaching experiences, (p. 176).

In this study, it was found that administrators did attach great importance to student teaching reports. Consistent with the research, administrators tended to use these reports for their predictive value. However, because practice teaching requirements vary from one

institution to the next, it was further found that the predictive value of student teaching reports depended on the institution. For example, student teaching reports from the Université de Moncton were viewed as very reliable because in their practice teaching, student teachers were subjected to teaching experiences similar in nature to what awaited them in Ouestville. In contrast, student teaching reports coming from some Québec institutions were viewed as less reliable and often resulted in further investigation. For example, by contacting the cooperating teacher who signed a student teaching report, in one case it was found that a prospective candidate's report was based on 11 lessons taught; all of which were "biologie troisième cycle".

In this study, it was found that the teachers interviewed gave little weight to the importance of their student teaching experiences. The reasons for this may be because teaching in Ouestville represents a very different experience from the experiences lived in practice teaching or perhaps that by its very nature, practice teaching is limited in being able to provide prospective teachers an idea of what to expect in their first year of teaching. It would be interesting to follow up on Tardif's four study participants to see in retrospect how well they understood the role of the

classroom teacher after their first year of teaching. As well, one cannot ignore the fact that study participants in Tardif's (1984) study experienced an intensive practicum compared to most institutions, especially those in Québec.

Teaching. The literature relating to the categories titled Welcome to Teaching, Professional Support, and Personal Support was further broken down into sub-categories. Each will be discussed separately.

Teacher training and teaching assignments. Because of the nature of the relationship between teacher training and teaching itself, it is not surprising that legitimate comments practitioners make about their training can only follow the opportunity to test their training in a teaching situation. Beaulieu (1980) in looking at the area of French language teacher training, identified the following areas requiring specific training: the psychology of bilingualism, second language acquisition, French language courses, methodology courses, and a more extensive practicum experience. At their 1984 conference which focused on the issue of French immersion teacher training and professional development, the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers reported similar findings,(p. 54).

They found that the majority of French immersion teachers in Canada were teaching in these programs because of their facility with the language. For the most part, they were native speakers. However, it was further found that most of these immersion teachers had not received any pre-service immersion training. For most, learning the teaching methodologies required of this program was done in the isolation of the classroom; often through trial and error.

The needs expressed in the literature for specific methodology courses for teaching in French as a second language and immersion programs are consistent with the study findings. Teachers interviewed for this study identified a lack in their training to this end and further exemplified this by not being able to clearly define what immersion teaching really was. After seven months, they felt confident saying it was different, but could not elaborate. Consistent with findings reported by the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers in 1984, it appears that these teachers were recruited mainly for their facility with the French language and not for their expertise as "immersion teachers" as none had received any specific training in this area. Although a lack of pre-service teacher training is common to French immersion teachers, it appears that this

phenomenon is not unique to these teachers. In examining the problems encountered by first year teachers, Ryan (1986) found that new teachers "frequently discover that whole areas of knowledge and skill have been left out of their preparation," (p. 29).

Another area of bilingual/bicultural teacher preparation identified by the Centre for Applied Linguistics (1974) as being key to success is "cultural awareness and sensitivity and a thorough knowledge of the cultures reflected in the two languages involved," (p. 2). For this study, recruitees in most cases could communicate in the English language, but since most participants were francophone, few had an understanding of the culture associated with the English language in the West. These recruitees also had little cultural sensitivity and understanding of the local francophone culture. The culture of Francophones living in a minority situation caused equal, if not more frustration, to participants in this study.

Another issue raised at the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers' (1984) conference on "French Immersion Teacher Training and Professional Development" of interest to findings of this study related to the area of science teaching. At this conference, it was found that "even though immersion teachers generally have

strong formal training, it is visibly weak in the science areas," (p. 50). This concern was raised by participants in this study. However, difficulties identified with science teaching may reflect an overall weakness in science resources in French language programs in Alberta rather than in the training recruitees received.

The last issue on teacher training to be identified in reviewing the literature relates to Zeichner's statement in Griffin (1983) that "teachers teach as they were taught," (p. 31). Since we all act out of our own experiences, it becomes easy to appreciate the difficulties encountered by teachers recruited to Alberta from other provinces. In this study, for example, one teacher was disappointed that his principal had not acknowledged the fact that he was coaching without receiving a salary supplement. A more common surprise to most recruitees was the breadth of courses assigned to teach. Even at the elementary level, one recruitee expressed concern with having to teach art. He had no training in this area and had difficulty accepting the responsibility to teach it. In Alberta, supervising and assuming responsibility for extra-curricular activities can be part of one's teaching assignment. As well, teaching a variety of subjects can also be expected of

teachers. However, this may not necessarily be the norm in all parts of Canada. In the two examples cited, recruitees' expectations reflected their prior educational experiences rather than the realities in Alberta.

Socialization. In this study, both recruitees as well as administrators described the first seven months as a period characterized by initial shock, a demanding workload and adjustment. However, in reviewing the literature, it appears that these may be symptoms of a larger phenomenon; that of being socialized into the teaching profession as well as being socialized into a new context.

For seven of the eight recruitees participating in this study, teaching in Ouestville Roman Catholic School District meant going from the more familiar university setting to their own classrooms. As this study found, the transition led to feelings of confusion and uncertainty. This study also found that administrators expected the transition from university life to the real world of classroom to result in confusion. In examining the pertinent issues during this transition period, Yinger in Griffin (1983) found language to be the primary source of difficulty. According to him, there are two kinds of language: the oral language in which is

embedded the knowledge of common sense, and the written language, in which is embedded the more scientific knowledge. Yinger in Griffin (1983) makes the observation that teacher training institutions use the written, more scientific language yet as teachers, must use oral language, the language of common sense. To him, the difficulties new teachers experience in transferring the knowledge gained from their university preparation to the practice of teaching are attributable to these two distinct languages. Ryan's (1986) observation that "New teachers often feel like strangers in a familiar setting," (p. 16), captures the essence of this phenomenon.

Recruitees for this study had a mean age of 24.25 years and were with the exception of one individual, first year teachers. For most, then, teaching in Ouestville Roman Catholic School District meant as Oleson and Whittaker in Blankenship (1977) describe as going through a period of "'developmental socialization' - acquiring an adult role and 'resocialization' from layman to professional," (p. 159). Although technically adults during university years, the responsibilities and expected behaviours of teachers in Ouestville were different from those expected of university students who are not granted adult status in all measures. As well,

teaching in Ouestville for most meant assuming for the first time the role of teacher rather than the more familiar role of the student.

In addition to being socialized into adulthood and the teaching profession, recruitees in this study also were socialized into an organization. In Chatman and Deal (1989),

> Organizational socialization is defined in several ways: 1) as the process by which employees are transferred from outsiders to participating and effective insiders (Feldman, 1976); 2) as the process by which new members are taught to adapt to an existing organizational culture and learn their individual roles within it (Schein, 1976; Wanous, 1980; and 3) as the process by which an individual learns the values, norms, and acceptable behaviours which permit one to function as a member of an organization (Dean, 1983; Van Maanen, 1976; Jablin, 1982, 1984; Louis, 1980; Weiss, 1978; Wilson, 1984), (p. 23).

Bittner in Blankenship (1977) defines socialization as "the process by which an individual, from both the individual and the organizational perspectives, becomes part of the organization. It begins to take place, we assume, whenever an individual associates with others 'under' a common symbolic label referring to that association," (p. 182). Throughout this study, there is evidence to support the notion that all recruitees experienced the phenomenon of organizational socialization. In his study of beginning teachers, Pickard (1989) made similar findings. He concluded that

"What new people bring to an organizational system reflects a history of past experience which either blends or conflicts with the temperament of the system. The relationship is interactive and seems to unfold through jostling of personal and organizational wills," (p. 180). Consistent with these findings, we see in this study that not all recruitees reacted in the same way to the pressures of socialization. For example, some expressed concern with the amount of authority parents had, whereas for others, being expected to go to church on Sundays was an issue. The whole process of becoming a member of an organization, of allowing oneself to be socialized, remained a voluntary process for recruitees. For those who resisted the process, becoming full members of the organization was more difficult than for those who willingly allowed themselves to becoming socialized members. The potential conflict lay in the fact that on the one hand, these teachers were recruited to strengthen the Franco-Albertan culture and on the other hand, certain aspects of their culture were clearly not welcome by the organization.

In his work on factors related to the socialization of teaching, Zeichner in Griffin (1983) identifies three basic choices for new members to an organization. In the first of these, "situational adjustment", individuals

willingly turn themselves into the kind of person the situation demands. This further implies total value commitment as well as behavioral conformity, (pp. 40-1). The second choice is not as easy. In this case, individuals "act without value commitment; in ways which are inconsistent with their underlying beliefs," (p. 41). This, he labels "strategic compliance," (p. 41). The third choice for new members to an organization he labels "strategic redefinition," (p. 41). In this case, individuals change the meaning of situations or redefine situations as they see fit to accommodate their underlying beliefs.

As previously mentioned, allowing oneself to become a member of an organization remained for these recruitees largely a voluntary process. In this study, examples can be found where recruitees acted in all of the three ways Zeichner in Griffin (1983) described. However, a real source of discontentment for recruitees came when they chose to act according to Zeichner's third category. Here recruitees acted in ways which were consistent with their own belief and value systems and rejected pressures to change. A clear example of this was where unmarried couples chose to live together. Although the school system disapproved, these couples were not prepared to conform.

Support systems. In reporting the findings for this study, support was further divided into two categories: professional support and personal support. Although reported in this way, the interrelationship which exists between the two categories as they both tie back to the individual recruitee cannot be overlooked. In his work, Zeichner in Griffin (1983) reinforces this notion by agreeing with Johnston and Ryan's (1983) position that "we cannot separate the personal and professional lives of beginning teachers in our attempts to understand the development of teachers," (p. 29). Study findings and the literature seem to be consistent with the conceptual framework for this study in that the support provided to enhance both social and professional experiences relate to one common denominator: the recruitee. It is in this light that the literature, as it relates to the study findings, will be discussed.

In terms of pre-service support, Shymoniak (1968), in his study of immigrant teachers to Alberta, found a need and desire on the part of teachers new to Alberta to have an extensive orientation prior to school opening. In the conclusion of his study, he outlined in detail topics or areas that should be addressed at such an orientation, (pp. 106-7). Jensen (1986), Mickler (1984), Rebore (1987) and Small (1986) also provide comprehensive

inventories of orientation activities. From an analysis of these inventories, it becomes apparent that the work done by Ouestville Roman Catholic School District, the Alberta Teachers' Association, as well as the Alberta School Boards' Association for a Bilingual Education provides for a comprehensive orientation to teaching in Alberta and more specifically, this particular school district.

In terms of in-service support, administrators tended again to focus on providing professional support. For example, the buddy system was facilitated by administrators. However, on this, Newberry in Griffin (1983) reports that the influence of experienced teachers is different in quality and direction in each case. Therefore, "one cannot generalize anything good or negative from their influence," (p. 12). It is interesting to note that in this study, the most successful "pair" was the recruitee who found her own buddy -- another beginning teacher recruited from out-of-province teaching the same grade level in the same program. Although pairing recruitees with more experienced teachers is practiced, findings in this study appear to be consistent with Newberry in Griffin (1983) in that "nothing good or negative from their influence" can be generalized, (p. 12).

In this study, teachers complained that good teaching resources and materials were lacking. Ryan (1986) in his study also found that new teachers "have difficulty finding appropriate material to teach," (p. 30). In looking more specifically at French language teachers, Beaulieu (1980) found that individually created and locally developed materials were the ones used. She also found that commercially produced and adapted materials were last resorts, (pp. 96-7).

The area of teacher supervision also seemed to be an area of concern for recruitees in this study. In general, recruitees expressed a desire for more feedback from administrators. This study finding appears to be consistent with the literature. Hewitson (1975) in his study entitled The Professional Satisfaction of Beginning Teachers found that "there was a substantial desire for more frequent supervision among beginning teachers," (p. 242). According to Ryan (1986) the different meanings the supervisor and supervised bring to teacher supervision may account for the different perceptions. In this study, recruitees tended to express a desire for approval of what they were doing. On the other hand, administrators in this district tended to view teacher supervision more summatively.

In the end, the feelings shared by recruitees who participated in this study appear to be in large part symptomatic of being socialized into the teaching profession as well as into the context. As for the first year of teaching, Lortie in Griffin (1986) states that "Evidence exists that beginning teachers learn how to teach during their first year largely alone, through trial and error and in the isolation of their own classrooms," (p. 8). He further added that "It seems that beginning teachers (with varying levels of skills and personal resources) interact with school contexts (which differ in terms of the constraints and opportunities they present to beginners) in ways that make the powers of becoming a teacher a 'riddle' to be solved somewhat differently in each instance," (p. 34).

Personal Reflections

Doing this study has provided the researcher the opportunity to reflect on several related issues. The first of these relates to the relentless commitment administrators and various stakeholders from this school jurisdiction have for French language programs. Unlike the more stable English programs, French language programs experience extremely high rates of teacher turnover. The energy, enthusiasm devoted to recruiting,

orientation, socializing, et cetera, all with the knowledge that the following year it will all have to be repeated, reflects remarkable commitment.

The apparent success of French language programs in this jurisdiction is also remarkable. In spite of high teacher turnover, being staffed by many beginning teachers with no French language methodology training and the lack of resources, the programs continue to be successful in terms of attracting students. The researcher often wonders what the outcomes of these French language programs would be if the staff were made up of more trained and experienced teachers who had access to more adequate resources?

In the end, though, putting this story together has permitted the researcher to get a deeper understanding of what it meant for these teachers to begin their careers in a different part of Canada; in this case Ouestville, a small rural Alberta community. One of the assumptions of this study was that a positive social and professional experience for recruited teachers may increase teacher retention. The data gathered for this study tend to support this statement in a general way. However, the researcher has come to realize that there are often other factors over which participants for this study exercise little or no control. For example, current regulations

in Québec do not allow the recognition of teaching experience for salary purposes from other provinces. This regulation certainly acts as a deterrent for teachers who might otherwise have prolonged their length of service. Now the researcher is less certain that there is an immediate relationship between a positive social and professional experience and teacher retention.

Implications for Practice

From this study, it becomes evident that much of what is currently being done for new teachers recruited from other provinces is indeed appreciated. Accordingly, providing a comprehensive pre-service orientation, as well as providing the needed professional and personal support ought to continue. In addition to this, however, the following suggestions might be considered.

The area of teacher supervision might be reexamined. Recruitees expressed the need for more feedback. On this, administrators may wish to consider a teacher-supervisor model which provides for more frequent visits with an end to improving instruction.

Providing recruitees assistance which would permit them integration into the community might also be considered. Although community life in this study tended

to be viewed as separate and distinct from the professional life of recruitees, the literature suggests that the personal and professional lives of beginning teachers cannot be separated. Accordingly, then, providing assistance to this end may result in a more balanced support system for recruitees as well as permit them to gain a better understanding of the context in which they are both working and living.

In addition to the continuation or implementation of the previously mentioned practices, perhaps the most important implication for practice has to do with exploring the possibility of negotiating the transportability of teaching experience gained in Alberta into Québec. From this study, it is apparent that the existing policy governing the recognition of prior service for salary purposes in Québec poses a negative influence on the length of service these teachers might provide.

The last point which might be considered involves all stakeholder groups having an interest in French language programs in Alberta. Although Canada has officially been a bilingual country since 1968, the most serious problem facing French language education today remains the acute shortage of teachers. A strategic plan involving the Federal and Provincial Governments, universities,

professional associations, parent organizations and school jurisdictions with the view of solving the shortage of French language teachers is recommended.

Implications for Future Research

This study involved understanding the lived experiences of teachers recruited from other provinces for French language programs. It might equally be beneficial to obtain an understanding of the experience from the students' perspective. It would be beneficial for both practitioners as well as theorists to get a deeper understanding of the ways in which students might be affected by continuously being exposed to young inexperienced newly recruited teachers from other provinces who have no French language methodology courses in their training.

Another area which warrants further investigation is the whole "va et vient" of French language teachers. A study which would track the immigration as well as the emigration patterns of these teachers would also be beneficial. Such a study could provide useful data for individual school jurisdictions as well as various orders of government in addressing the shortage of French language teachers.

This study was carried out in a rural Alberta community which has a significant francophone population. As most French immersion and second language programs are in anglophone communities, it would be interesting to conduct a similar study in one of these rural communities to see where the lived experiences differ, if they do at all. Such a study could have implications for different orientation and support practices.

A similar study could also be conducted in an urban setting. Again, such a study could provide insight for practitioners in urban jurisdictions which would assist them in providing the appropriate teacher induction for newly recruited French language teachers from other provinces.

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Appendix A

Interview Guide for Teachers

Interview Guide for Teachers

1. Why did you choose to come to teach in Alberta?

2. Where did you come from? Where were you yourself raised? Educated?

3. Had you ever been to Alberta? How were you recruited? (Attempt here to get an understanding of what they knew and expected about teaching in rural Alberta.)

4. In looking back at your initial experiences (the first seven months), for each of the categories under Personal and Professional experiences below at right:

a. What was it like?

b. What was done for you as a newly recruited teacher from another province?

c. What was your reaction?

d. What could be done to enhance the initial experiences of teachers recruited from other provinces for Alberta's rural French language programs?

Checklist.

Personal Experiences

Community support?
Community itself?
Language?
Family?
Homesickness?
Social life?
Different culture/ milieu?
Housing?
Cost of living?
Others?

Professional Experiences

Previous teaching experience?
Pre-service induction?
Support:
- Government?
- Community?
- School jurisdiction?
- School?
- Principal's?
- Colleagues'?
- etc.?

Language:
- E.S.L. opportunities?

Supervision?
Others?

5. What are your future plans? What could be done, if anything, to retain French language teachers for Alberta's rural schools?

Appendix B

Interview Guide for Administrators

Interview Guide for Administrators

1. Why do you offer a French language program?

2 Where do you get your teachers from to teach in these programs?

3. For those recruited from out of province, what do you do to enhance their initial Personal and Professional Experiences?

Checklist

Personal Experiences

Community support?
Community itself?
Language?
Family?
Homesickness?
Social life?
Different culture/milieu?
Housing?
Cost of living?
Others?

Professional Experiences

Pre-service induction?
Support:
- Government?
- Community?
- School jurisdiction?
- School?
- Principal's?
- Colleagues'?
- etc.?

Language:
- E.S.L. opportunities?

Supervision (teacher)?
Others?

4. What could be done in addition to what you are already doing to enhance their initial experiences?

5. Is retaining French language teachers for your French programs a problem? If so, what are the long term solutions?

Appendix C

Initial Correspondence Confirming Participation in Study

(Date)

Dear (Respondent)

Further to ourr telephone conversation of (Date), this is to confirm that you have agreed to being interviewed on (Date and Time) at (Place).

Accordingly, the interview will focus on the four following research questions. These are:

1. How do teachers who come to Alberta to teach in French language programs describe their initial experiences?;
2. What types of professional and social orientations are provided for these teachers?;
3. How do the teachers react to the orientation and induction activities provided?; and
4. What orientation and induction activities might enhance the favourableness of the initial teaching experiences of teachers in French language programs?

As I also mentioned to you in our telephone conversation, I am a graduate student at the University of Alberta in the department of Educational Administration. One of the requirements of my program is the completion of a thesis. To this end, as a participant in the study, you will agree to:

1. be interviewed;

2. review the transcript of the interview and make any additions, deletions, and/or changes to ensure that the transcript reflects the intent of your messages; and

3. (a) subsequent interview(s) as deemed necessary by myself.

In fulfilling these three steps, you will be providing me with the data required to carry out this study.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may opt out at any time. As well, I assure you that your participation as well as the information shared by yourself will be treated in a confidential manner. With regard to anonymity, sources will not be revealed and pseudonyms will be used.

I sincerely thank you for your time, assistance, and cooperation in this regard.

Yours very truly,

Richard Slevinsky
(Telephone Number)

Appendix D

Correspondence used for Verification of Data

(Date)

Dear (Respondent)

Kindly find enclosed a copy of the transcript of our interview. I would ask that you read it carefully and make any deletions, additions, and/or changes that you wish so that the data best reflect the intent of your "message".

Once this is completed, kindly return it to me using the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope or, if you prefer, telephone me at the number below to make the changes.

Thanking you in advance for your time, assistance, and cooperation with this matter, I remain.

Yours very truly,

Richard Slevinsky
(Telephone Number)

Appendix E

Follow-up Correspondence

(Date)

Dear (Respondent)

I would like to thank you for your interest, enthusiasm, and assistance over the past few months. Without your help, the study would not have been possible.

Again, I would like to reassure you that your participation as well as the information shared by yourself will be treated in a confidential manner. With regard to anonymity, sources will not be revealed and pseudonyms will be used.

With regard to study findings, when these will be available, I will contact you. However, should you decide to "move back home" or "move on" to teach elsewhere, kindly keep me informed as to your new address.

Again, thank you.

Yours very truly,

Richard Slevinsky
(Telephone Number)